

THE

**B**OOK-LOVER'S  
CATHEDRAL

"Julius Petersen's Little Room."

1833.



THE LIBRARY  
OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA  
LOS ANGELES



Δ | 2

THE BOOK-LOVER'S  
ENCHIRIDION.





The Book-Lover's  
Enchiridion.

---

THOUGHTS ON THE  
Solace  
AND  
Companionship  
OF  
Books.

Selected and Chronologically Arranged by  
Philobiblos.

---

"INFINITE RICHES IN A LITTLE ROOM."  
*C. Marlowe.*

---

1883.

LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co.,  
STATIONERS' COURT.

EDINBURGH: DAVID DOUGLAS.  
MANCHESTER: J. E. CORNISH.  
GLASGOW: DAVID M. MAIN.

PRINTED BY A. IRELAND AND CO.,  
MANCHESTER.

Second Thousand.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



TO  
JAMES CROSSLEY, ESQ.,  
PRESIDENT OF THE CHETHAM SOCIETY.  
AN  
ACCOMPLISHED  
AND  
HONOURED BOOK-LOVER ;  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY  
ITS COMPILER.



## PREFACE.

---

THE motto to this little volume gives the key-note to its contents. "Infinite riches in a little room," describes what the reader will find within it. The object of the compiler has been to present, in chronological order, the summed-up testimonies of all the best Book-Lovers on the subject of Books, and the Habit and Love of Reading. The writers selected from range from Solomon and Cicero down to Carlyle and Ruskin. On this bea-roll of illustrious names, "that down the steady breeze of honour sail," will be found those of Horace, Seneca, Plutarch, Richard de Bury (author of "Philobiblon," written at the end of the 13th century), Chaucer, Luther, Montaigne, Bacon, Shakespeare, Bishop Hall, Robert Burton (author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy"), Fuller, Milton, Baxter, Cowley, Locke, Addison, Steele,

Johnson, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Lamb, Southey, Godwin, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Landor, Leigh Hunt, Bulwer, Macaulay, Herschel, Hare, Maurice, Helps, Dawson, Carlyle, Ruskin, Hamerton, John Bright, and many other eminent thinkers.

The reader will find in the following pages the deliberate utterances of some of the wisest spirits of all time, upon the subject of Books and what they do for us—the steadfast and unpresuming friendship of these silent counsellors, — the consolation they afford in every variety of circumstance or fortune,—and the ceaseless delights they bring at so little cost, and with no trouble or difficulty.

The writers of the present century have contributed, of course, most largely to the general store of thought on this special subject. Living authors, and the representatives of some who have passed away, have kindly allowed the compiler to make use of works in which they hold a vested interest. Among the selections will be found many valuable pages from American -

authors. The words of Channing, Washington Irving, Emerson, Longfellow, Theodore Parker, Hillard, Alcott, Beecher, and Collyer stand side by side with those of their English co-thinkers.

This little Manual, it is hoped, will meet some of the special wants and moods of many thoughtful persons; more particularly of those who are earnest and reverent, and who find their most enduring pleasures in studious contemplation.

The compiler has gone to the original sources for his matter, selecting direct from the works of the writers quoted; so that the correctness of the text may be relied upon. In a few cases only has he resorted to existing collections of extracts.

A. I.

For Friends, although your lordship be scant, yet I hope you are not altogether destitute; if you be, do but look upon good books: they are true friends, that will neither flatter nor dissemble: be you but true to yourself, applying that which they teach unto the party grieved, and you shall need no other comfort nor counsel. To them and to God's holy Spirit, directing you in the reading of them, I commend your lordship.—*Francis Bacon—Letter to Chief Justice Coke.*

Books are a safe ground and a long one, but still introductory only, for what we really seek is ever comparison of experiences—to know if you have found therein what alone I prize, or, still better, if you have found what I have never found, and yet is admirable to me also. . . . I hold that we have never reached their best use until our own thought rises to such a pitch that we cannot afford to read much. I own this loftiness is rare, and we must long be thankful to our silent friends before the day comes when we can honestly dismiss them.—*R. W. Emerson, in a Letter to a Friend.*

Books, we know,  
Are a substantial world, both pure and  
good ;  
Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh  
and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.

*William Wordsworth.*



W

M  
Z  
1003  
I 65  
1273

# The Book-Lover's Enchiridion.



SOLOMON. B.C. 1033—975.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.—Proverbs xiii. 20.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it!—Proverbs xv. 23.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.—Proverbs xxiii. 12.

SOCRATES. B.C. 468—399.

Employ your time in improving yourself by other men's documents; so you shall come easily by what others have laboured hard for. Prefer knowledge to wealth, for the one is transitory, the other perpetual.

PLATO. B.C. 427—347.

Books are the immortal sons deifying their sires.

B

3364139

INSCRIPTION ON THE LIBRARY AT  
ALEXANDRIA, FOUNDED ABOUT  
300 B.C. DESTROYED A.D. 640.

THE NOURISHMENT OF THE SOUL; or,  
according to Diodorus, THE MEDICINE OF  
THE MIND.—I. D'Israeli's "Curiosities of  
Literature."

CICERO. B.C. 106—41.

Nunc ceterae neque temporum sunt, neque  
aetatum omnium, neque locorum; hæc studia  
adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant,  
secundas res ornant, adversis perfugium, ac  
solatium praebeant, delectant domi, non im-  
pediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrin-  
antur, rusticantur.—"Arc. 7."

[For the other employments of life do not  
suit all times, ages, or places; whereas  
literary studies employ the thoughts of the  
young; are the delight of the old, the orna-  
ment of prosperity, the refuge and solace of  
adversity, our amusement at home, no im-  
pediment to us abroad, employ our thoughts  
in the night, attend us when we travel, and  
accompany us when we retire into the  
country.]

HORACE. B.C. 65—8.

O rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque  
licebit,  
Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inerti-  
bus horis,  
Ducere sollicitae jucunda oblivio vitae?  
"Sat. II., 6. 51."

[O country, when shall I behold you, and when will it be granted to me, at one time reading the writings of the ancients, at another taking my siesta, and spending my hours in indolence, to quaff at my ease the sweet forgetfulness of anxious life?—"Lonsdale and Lee's Prose Translation of Horace." (The Globe Edition.)

O country, when shall I behold thee, and be allowed to drink a sweet oblivion of the cares of life, musing on the works of ancient sages, or in gentle sleep and hours of peaceful abstraction from the world's busy scenes?—"Ramage's Translation."]

SENECA. B.C. 58—A.D. 32.

If you devote your time to study, you will avoid all the irksomeness of this life; nor will you long for the approach of night, being tired of the day; nor will you be a burden to yourself, nor your society insupportable to others.—"Ep. 82."

Otium sine literis mors est, et vivi hominis sepultura.—"Ep. 82."

[Leisure without study is death, and the grave of a living man.]

PLUTARCH. 46—120.

We ought to regard books as we do sweet-meats, not wholly to aim at the pleasantest, but chiefly to respect the wholesomest; not forbidding either, but approving the latter most.

## 4 Persian and Hindu Sayings.

ST. PAUL. A.D. 65.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.—Romans xv. 4.

All may learn, and all may be comforted.—I. Corinthians xiv. 31.

### FROM THE PERSIAN.

A wise man knows an ignorant one, because he has been ignorant himself; but the ignorant cannot recognise the wise, because he has never been wise.

### HINDU SAYING.

The words of the good are like a staff in a slippery place.

### FROM THE PERSIAN.

They asked their wisest man by what means he had attained to such a degree of knowledge? He replied: "Whatever I did not know, I was not ashamed to inquire about. Inquire about everything that you do not know; since, for the small trouble of asking, you will be guided in the road of knowledge."

RICHARD DE BURY, BISHOP OF  
DURHAM. 1287—1345.

In Books we find the dead as it were living; in Books we foresee things to come; in Books warlike affairs are methodized; the rights of peace proceed from Books.

All things are corrupted and decay with time. Saturn never ceases to devour those whom he generates; inasmuch that the glory of the world would be lost in oblivion if God had not provided mortals with a remedy in Books. Alexander the ruler of the world; Julius the invader of the world and of the city, the first who in unity of person assumed the empire in arms and arts; the faithful Fabricius, the rigid Cato, would at this day have been without a memorial if the aid of Books had failed them. Towers are razed to the earth, cities overthrown, triumphal arches mouldered to dust; nor can the King, or Pope be found, upon whom the privilege of a lasting name can be conferred more easily than by Books. A Book made, renders succession to the author: for as long as the Book exists, the author remaining *athavatos*, immortal, cannot perish. . . . The holy Boetius attributes a threefold existence to Truth,—in the mind, in the voice, and in writing; it appears to abide most usefully and fructify most productively of advantage in Books. For the Truth of the voice perishes with the sound. Truth latent in the mind, is hidden wisdom and invisible treasure; but the Truth which illuminates Books desires to manifest itself to every disciplinable sense, to the sight when read, to the hearing when heard: it, moreover, in a manner commends itself to the touch, when submitting to be transcribed, collated, corrected and preserved. Truth confined to the mind, though it may

be the possession of a noble soul, while it wants a companion and is not judged of, either by the sight, or the hearing, appears to be inconsistent with pleasure. But the Truth of the voice is open to the hearing only, and latent to the sight (which shows us many differences of things fixed upon by a most subtle motion, beginning and ending as it were simultaneously). But the Truth written in a Book, being not fluctuating, but permanent, shows itself openly to the sight, passing through the spiritual ways of the eyes, as the porches and halls of common sense and imagination; it enters the chamber of intellect, reposes itself upon the couch of memory, and there congenerates the eternal Truth of the mind.

Lastly, let us consider how great a commodity of doctrine exists in Books, how easily, how secretly, how safely they expose the nakedness of human ignorance without putting it to shame. These are the masters who instruct us without rods and ferrules, without hard words and anger, without clothes or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if investigating you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble; if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you.

You only, O Books, are liberal and independent. You give to all who ask, and enfranchise all who serve you assiduously. . . . Truly you are the ears filled with most palatable grains. . . . You are golden urns in which manna is laid up, rocks

flowing with honey, or rather indeed honey-combs; udders most copiously yielding the milk of life, store-rooms ever full; the four-streamed river of Paradise, where the human mind is fed, and the arid intellect moistened and watered; . . . fruitful olives, vines of Engaddi, fig-trees knowing no sterility; burning lamps to be ever held in the hand.

The library, therefore, of wisdom is more precious than all riches, and nothing that can be wished for is worthy to be compared with it. Whosoever, therefore, acknowledges himself to be a zealous follower of truth, of happiness, of wisdom, of science, or even of the faith, must of necessity make himself a Lover of Books.—“*Philobiblon*, a Treatise on the Love of Books:” written in Latin in 1344, and translated from the first edition, 1473, by J. B. Inglis. (London, 1882.)

GEOFFREY CHAUCER. 1328—1400.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,  
That unto logik hadde long igo

. . . . .

For him was lever have at his beddes head  
Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed,  
Of Aristotil, and of his philosophie.

. . . . .

But al though he were a philosopre,  
Yet hadde he bnt litul gold in cofre;  
But al that he might of his frendes hente,  
On bookes and his lernyng he it spente.

“Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.”

And as for me, though that I konne but  
 lyte,  
 On bokes for to rede I me delyte,  
 And to hem yeve I feyth and ful credence,  
 And in myn herte have hem in reverence  
 So hertely, that ther is game noon,  
 That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,  
 But yt be seldome on the holy day,  
 Save, certeynly, whan that the monethe of  
 May  
 Is comen, and that I here the foules synge,  
 And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge,  
 Farwel my boke, and my devocion !

“Prologue to the Legende of Goode  
 Women.”

For out of old fieldes, as men saithe,  
 Cometh all this new corne fro yere to yere,  
 And out of old bookes, in good faithe,  
 Cometh al this new science that men lere.

“The Assembly of Foules.”

THOMAS À KEMPIS. 1380—1471.

If thou wilt receive profit, read with  
 humility, simplicity, and faith; and seek  
 not at any time the fame of being learned.—  
 Book I. chap. v. No. 2.

Verily, when the day of judgment comes,  
 we shall not be examined what we have  
 read, but what we have done; nor how  
 learnedly we have spoken, but how reli-  
 giously we have lived.—Book I. chap. vi.  
 No. 5.



MARTIN LUTHER. 1483—1546.

Every great book is an action, and every great action is a book.

All who would study with advantage in any art whatsoever, ought to betake themselves to the reading of some sure and certain books oftentimes over; for to read many books produceth confusion, rather than learning, like as those who dwell everywhere are not anywhere at home.—“Table Talk.”

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE. 1537—1592.

The Commerce of Books is much more certain, and much more our own. It yields all other Advantages to the other two; but has the Constancy and Facility of it's Service for it's own Share: it goes side by side with me in my whole Course, and every where is assisting to me. It comforts me in my Age and Solitude; it eases me of a troublesome Weight of Idleness, and delivers me at all Hours from Company that I dislike; and it blunts the Point of Grievs, if they are not extreme, and have not got an entire Possession of my Soul. To divert myself from a troublesome Fancy, 'tis but to run to my Books; they presently fix me to them, and drive the other out of my Thoughts; and do not mutiny to see that I have only recourse to them for want of other more real, natural and lively Conveniences; they always receive me with the same Kindness. . . . The sick Man is not to be

lamented, who has his Cure in his Sleeve. In the Experience and Practice of this Sentence, which is a very true one, all the Benefit I reap from Books consists; and yet I make as little use of it almost as those who know it not; I enjoy it as a Miser does his Money, in knowing that I may enjoy it when I please; my Mind is satisfied with this Right of Possession. I never travel without Books, either in Peace or War; and yet sometimes I pass over several Days, and sometimes Months, without looking into them; I will read by and by, say I to my self, or to Morrow, or when I please, and Time steals away without any Inconvenience. For it is not to be imagin'd to what Degree I please my self, and rest content in this Consideration, that I have them by me, to divert my self with them when I am so dispos'd, and to call to mind what an Ease and Assistance they are to my Life. 'Tis the best Viaticum I have yet found out for this human Journey, and I very much lament those Men of Understanding who are unprovided of it. And yet I rather accept of any sort of diversion, how light soever, because this can never fail me. When at Home, I a little more frequent my Library, from whence I at once survey all the whole Concerns of my Family: As I enter it, I from thence see under my Garden, Court, and Base-court, and into all the parts of the Building. There I turn over now one Book, and then another, of various Subjects without Method or Design: One while I

meditate, another I record, and dictate as I walk to and fro, such Whimsies as these with which I here present you. 'Tis in the third Story of a Tower, of which the Ground-Room is my Chapel, the second Story an Apartment with a withdrawing Room and Closet, where I often lie to be more retired. Above it is a great Wardrobe, which formerly was the most useless part of the House. In that Library I pass away most of the Days of my Life, and most of the Hours of the Day. In the Night I am never there. There is within it a Cabinet handsome and neat enough, with a very convenient Fire-place for the Winter, and Windows that afford a great deal of light, and very pleasant Prospects. And were I not more afraid of the Trouble than the Expence, the Trouble that frights me from all Business, I could very easily adjoin on either Side, and on the same Floor, a Gallery of an hundred Paces long, and twelve broad, having found Walls already rais'd for some other design, to the requisite height. Every Place of Retirement requires a Walk. My Thoughts sleep if I sit still; my Fancy does not go by it self, my legs must move it; and all those who study without a Book are in the same Condition. The Figure of my Study is round, and has no more flat Wall than what is taken up by my Table and Chairs; so that the remaining parts of the Circle present me a View of all my Books at once, set upon five Degrees of Shelves round about me. It has three

noble and free Prospects, and is sixteen Paces Diameter. I am not so continually there in Winter; for my House is built upon an Eminence, as it's Name imports, and no part of it is so much expos'd to the Wind and Weather as that, which pleases me the better, for being of a painful Access, and a little remote, as well upon the account of Exercise, as being also there more retir'd from the Crowd. 'Tis there that I am in my Kingdom, as we say, and there I endeavour to make my self an absolute Monarch, and to sequester this one Corner from all Society, whether Conjugal, Filial, or Civil. Elsewhere I have but verbal Authority only, and of a confus'd Essence. That Man, in my Opinion, is very miserable, who has not at home, where to be by himself, where to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others. . . . I think it much more supportable to be always alone than never to be so. If any one shall tell me, that it is to under-value the Muses, to make use of them only for Sport, and to pass away the Time; I shall tell him, that he does not know the value of Sport and Pastime so well as I do; I can hardly forbear to add further, that all other end is ridiculous. I live from Hand to Mouth, and, with Reverence be it spoken, I only live for my self; to that all my Designs do tend, and in that terminate. I studied when young for Ostentation; since to make my self a little wiser; and now for my Diversion, but never for any Profit. A vain and prodigal Humour I had

after this sort of Furniture, not only for supplying my own needs and defects, but moreover for Ornament and outward show; I have since quite abandon'd it. Books have many charming Qualities to such as know how to choose them. But every Good has it's Ill; 'tis a Pleasure that is not pure and clean, no more than others: It has it's Inconveniencies, and great ones too. The Mind indeed is exercised by it, but the Body, the care of which I must withal never neglect, remains in the mean time without Action, grows heavy and melancholy. I know no Excess more prejudicial to me, nor more to be avoided in this my declining Age.—“Of Three Commerces.” (Charles Cotton's Translation, 1685.)

JOHN FLORIO. 1545—1625.

*Concerning the Honour of Books.*

Since honour from the honourer proceeds,  
How well do they deserve, that memorize  
And leave in books for all posterities  
The names of worthies and their virtuous  
deeds;  
When all their glory else, like water-weeds  
Without their element, presently dies,  
And all their greatness quite forgotten lies,  
And when and how they flourished no man  
heeds!  
How poor remembrances are statues, tombs  
And other monuments that men erect  
To princes, which remain in closed rooms,

Where but a few behold them, in respect  
Of Books, that to the universal eye  
Show how they lived; the other where they  
lie !

Prefixed to the second edition of his  
Translation of Montaigne's Es-  
says, 1613.—[*Vide* Notes to D.  
M. Main's "Treasury of English  
Sonnets," p. 248, in reference to  
this Sonnet.]

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. 1549.

Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.—  
Collect for Second Sunday in Advent.

JOHN LYLIE [or LILLY]. 1553—1601.

. . . far more seemely were it for thee  
to have thy Studie full of Bookes, than  
thy Purses full of Mony.—"Euphues; the  
Anatomy of Wit."

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. 1554—1586.

It is manifest that all government of  
action is to be gotten by knowledge, and  
knowledge, best, by gathering many know-  
ledges, which is reading.

FRANCIS BACON. 1561—1629.

Studies serve for delight, for ornament,  
and for ability. Their chief use for delight  
is in privateness and retiring; for ornament  
is in discourse; and for ability is in the  
judgment and disposition of business. . .

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested ; that is, some books are to be read only in parts ; others to be read, but not curiously ; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. . . . Reading maketh a full man ; conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man ; and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory : if he confer little, he had need have a present wit : and if he read little, he had need have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not.—“*Essays.*”

The images of men's wits and knowledge remain in books, exempted from the worry of time and capable of perpetual renovation. Neither are they fitly to be called images, because they generate still, and casts their seeds in the minds of others, provoking and causing infinite actions and opinions in succeeding ages.—“*Essays.*”

SAMUEL DANIEL. 1562—1619.

O blessed Letters ! that combine in one  
All Ages past, and make one live with all.  
By you we do confer with who are gone,  
And the Dead-living unto Council call ;  
By you th' unborn shall have Communion  
Of what we feel and what doth us befall.  
Soul of the World, Knowledge without thee ;

What hath the Earth that truly glorious is?  
. . . What Good is like to this,  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the Reading, and the World's  
Delight?

“Musophilus; containing a General  
Defence of Learning.”

And tho' books, madam, cannot make this  
Mind,  
Which we must bring apt to be set aright;  
Yet do they rectify it in that Kind,  
And touch it so, as that it turns that Way  
Where Judgment lies. And tho' we cannot  
find  
The certain Place of Truth; yet do they  
stay,  
And entertain us near about the same:  
And give the Soul the best Delight that  
may  
Enchear it most, and most our Sp'rits  
enflame  
To Thoughts of Glory, and to worthy Ends.  
“To the Lady Lucy, Countess of  
Bedford.”

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. 1564—1616.

Me, poor man, my library  
Was dukedom large enough.

“Tempest,” i. 2.

Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me,  
From my own library, with volumes that  
I prize above my dukedom.

“Tempest,” i. 2.



Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties  
that are bred in a book.

"*Love's Labour Lost*," iv. 2.

The books, the arts, the acadèmes,  
That show, contain, and nourish all the  
world.

"*Love's Labour Lost*," iv. 3.

Come, and take a choice of all my library;  
And so beguile thy sorrow.

"*Titus Andronicus*," iv. 1.

DR. JOSEPH HALL, BISHOP OF  
NORWICH. 1574—1656.

Not to be cloyed with the same conceit is difficult, above human strength; but to a man so furnished with all sorts of knowledge, that according to his dispositions he can change his studies, I should wonder that ever the sun should seem to pass slowly. . . . What a heaven lives a scholar in, that at once in one close room can daily converse with all the glorious martyrs and fathers? . . . Let the world condemn us; while we have these delights we cannot envy them; we cannot wish ourselves other than we are. Besides, the way to all other contentments is troublesome; the only recompense is in the end. To delve in the mines, to scorch in the fire for the getting, for the fining of gold is a slavish toil; the comfort in Study itself is our life; from which we would not be barred for a world.

I can wonder at nothing more than how a man can be idle—but of all others, a scholar,—in so many improvements of reason, in such sweetness of knowledge, in such variety of studies, in such importunity of thoughts. To find wit in poetry; in philosophy, profoundness; in history, wonder of events; in oratory, sweet eloquence; in divinity, supernatural light, and holy devotion—as so many rich metals in their proper mines,—whom would it not ravish with delight?—"Epistle to Mr. Milward."

What a world of wit is here packed up together! I know not whether this sight doth more dismay or comfort me; it dismays me to think, that here is so much that I cannot know; it comforts me to think that this variety yields so good helps to know what I should. There is no truer word than that of Solomon—there is no end of making many books; this sight verifies it—there is no end; indeed, it were pity there should. God hath given to man a busy soul, the agitation whereof cannot but through time and experience work out many hidden truths; to suppress these would be no other than injurious to mankind, whose minds, like unto so many candles, should be kindled by each other. The thoughts of our deliberation are most accurate; these we vent into our papers; what a happiness is it, that without all offence of necromancy, I may here call up any of the ancient

worthies of learning, whether human or divine, and confer with them of all my doubts!—that I can at pleasure summon whole synods of reverend fathers, and acute doctors, from all the coasts of the earth, to give their well-studied judgments in all points of question which I propose! Neither can I cast my eye casually upon any of these silent masters, but I must learn somewhat: it is a wantonness to complain of choice. No law binds me to read all; but the more we can take in and digest, the better liking must the mind's needs be. Blessed be God that hath set up so many clear lamps in his church. Now, none but the wilfully blind can plead darkness; and blessed be the memory of those his faithful servants, that have left their blood, their spirits, their lives, in these precious papers, and have willingly wasted themselves into these during monuments, to give light unto others.—“Occasional Meditations.”

#### ALONZO OF ARRAGON.

Alonzo of Arragon was wont to say in commendation of Age, that Age appeared to be best in four things: old wood best to burn; old wine to drink; old friends to trust; and old authors to read.—Bacon's “Apophthegms,” No. 101. [Bartlett (“Familiar Quotations,” p. 84) quotes this saying, and refers to Melchior: “Spanish Proverbs,” ii. 1-20.]

JOHN FLETCHER, 1576—1625.

Give me

Leave to enjoy myself. That place, that  
does

Contain my books, the best companions, is  
To me a glorious court, where hourly I  
Converse with the old sages and philosophers.  
And sometimes for variety, I confer  
With kings and emperors, and weigh their  
counsels ;

Calling their victories, if unjustly got,  
Unto a strict account: and in my fancy,  
Deface their ill-planned statues. Can I  
then

Part with such constant pleasures, to embrace

Uncertain vanities? No: be it your care  
To augment a heap of wealth; it shall be  
mine

To increase in knowledge. Lights there for  
my study!

• • • • •  
If all thy pipes of wine were fill'd with  
books,

Made of the barks of trees, or mysteries  
writ

In old moth-eaten vellum, he would sip thy  
cellar

Quite dry, and still be thirsty. Then, for's  
diet,

He eats and digests more volumes at a meal,  
Than there would be larks (though the sky  
should fall)

Devour'd in a month in Paris.

"The Elder Brother," Act i. Scene 2.

## ROBERT BURTON. 1576—1640.

But amongst those exercises or recreations of the mind within doors, there is none so general, so aptly to be applied to all sorts of men, so fit and proper to expel idleness and melancholy, as that of study. [Here Cicero is quoted, the passage from whom is given *ante* p. 2.] What so full of content, as to read, walk, and see maps, pictures, statues, &c. . . . Who is he that is now wholly overcome with idleness, or otherwise encircled in a labyrinth of worldly care, troubles, and discontents, that will not be much lightened in his mind by reading of some enticing story, true or feigned, where as in a glass he shall observe what our forefathers have done, the beginnings, ruins, falls, periods of commonwealths, private men's actions displayed to the life, &c. Plutarch therefore calls them, *secundas mensas et bellaria*, the second course and junkets, because they were generally read at noblemen's feasts. Who is not earnestly affected with a passionate speech, well penned, an eloquent poem, or some pleasant bewitching discourse, like that of Heliodorus (Melancthon de Heliodoro), *ubi oblectatio quaedam placide fluit cum hilaritate conjuncta?* . . . To most kind of men it is an extraordinary delight to study. For what a world of books offers itself, in all subjects, arts, and science, to the rival contest and capacity of the reader !

. . . What is there so sure, what so pleasant? . . . What vast tomes are extant in law, physic, and divinity, for profit, pleasure, practice, speculation, in verse or prose! Their names alone are the subject of whole volumes; we know thousands of authors of all sorts, many great libraries full well furnished, like so many dishes of meat, served out for several palates; and he is a very block that is affected with none of them.

. . . Such is the excellency of these studies that all those ornaments, and childish bubbles of wealth, are not worthy to be compared to them; I would even live and die with such meditations, and take more delight, true content of mind in them, than thou hast in all thy wealth and sport, how rich soever thou art. And as Cardan well seconds me—"it is more honourable and glorious to understand these truths, than to govern provinces, to be beautiful, or to be young." The like pleasure there is in all other studies, to such as are truly addicted to them; the like sweetness, which, as Circe's cup bewitcheth a student, he cannot leave off. . . . Julius Scaliger . . . brake out into a pathological protestation, he had rather be the author of twelve verses in Lucan, or such an Ode in Horace, than Emperor of Germany. . . . King James (1605) when he came to see our University of Oxford, and amongst other edifices now went to view that famous Library renewed by Sir Thomas Bodley, in imitation of Alexander, at his departure brake out into that noble

speech: "If I were not a king, I would be a University man; and if it were so that I must be a prisoner, if I might have my wish, I would desire to have no other prison than that library, and to be chained together with so many good authors." So sweet is the delight of study, the more learning they have (as he that hath a dropsy, the more he drinks, the thirstier he is) the more they covet to learn; harsh at first learning is, *radices amarae*, but *fructus dulces*, according to Isocrates, pleasant at last; the longer they live, the more they are enamoured with the Muses. Heinsius, the keeper of the library at Leyden, in Holland, was mewed up in it all the year long; and that which to thy thinking should have bred loathing, caused in him a greater liking. "I no sooner (saith he) come into the library, but I bolt the doors to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is idleness, the mother of ignorance, and melancholy herself; and in the very lap of eternity amongst so many divine souls, I take my seat with so lofty a spirit and sweet content, that I pity all our great ones and rich men that know not this happiness." . . . Whosoever he is therefore that is overrun with solitariness, or carried away with pleasing melancholy and vain conceits, and for want of employment knows not how to spend his time; or crucified with worldly care, I can prescribe him no better remedy than this of study . . . provided

always that this malady proceed not from overmuch study; for in such case he adds fuel to the fire, and nothing can be more pernicious; let him take heed he do not overstretch his wits, and make a skeleton of himself. . . . Study is only prescribed to those that are otherwise idle, troubled in mind, or carried headlong with vain thoughts and imaginations to distract their cogitations (although variety of study, or some serious subject, would do the former no harm), and direct their continual meditations another way. Nothing in this case better than study. . . . Read the Scriptures, which Hyperius holds available of itself; "the mind is averted thereby from all worldly cares, and hath much quiet and tranquillity." For as Austin well hath it, 'tis *scientia scientiarum, omni melli dulcior, omni pani suavior, omni vino hilarior*: 'tis the best nepenthe, rarest cordial, sweetest alterative, presentest diverter; for neither, as Chrysostom well adds, "those boughs and leaves of trees which are plashed for cattle to stand under, in the heat of the day, in summer, so much refresh them with their acceptable shade, as the reading of the Scripture doth recreate and comfort a distressed soul, in sorrow and affliction." . . . *quod cibus corpori, lectio animae facit*, saith Seneca, "as meat is to the body, such is reading to the soul." . . . Cardan calls a library the physic of the soul; "divine authors fortify the mind, make men bold and constant; and (as Hyperius adds)



godly conference will not permit the mind to be tortured with absurd cogitations." Rhasis enjoins continual conference to such melancholy men, perpetual discourse of some history, tale, poem, news, &c., which feeds the mind as meat and drink doth the body, and pleaseth as much. . . . Saith Lipsius, "when I read Seneca, methinks I am beyond all human fortune, on the top of a hill above mortality." . . . I would for these causes wish him that is melancholy to use both human and divine authors, voluntarily to impose some task upon himself to divert his melancholy thoughts. . . . Or let him demonstrate a proposition in Euclid, in his last five books, extract a square root, or study algebra; than which, as Clavius holds, "in all human disciplines nothing can be more excellent or pleasant, so abstruse and recondite, so bewitching, so miraculous, so ravishing, so easy withal and full of delight."—"The Anatomy of Melancholy," Part ii., Sec. 2, Memb. 4.

SIR THOMAS OVERBURY. 1581—1613.

Books are a part of man's prerogative,  
In formal ink they Thoughts and Voices  
hold,  
That we to them our Solitude may give,  
And make Time Present travel that of Old.  
Our Life Fame pieceth longer at the End,  
And Books it farther backward do extend.

"The Wife."

A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY DIVINE.  
(Unverified.)

There be those that ungratefully complain of the heaviness of time, as if we could have too much of God's most precious gift of life and its containings. Let such persons consider that there be daily duties to be well performed which do not exclude innocent recreations and the privileged opportunities of silent conversation with the greatest minds and spirits, in their most chosen words, in their books, that lie ready and offer themselves to us if we would.

GEORGE WITHER. 1588—1667.

She [The Muse] doth tell me where to borrow  
Comfort in the midst of sorrow :  
Makes the desolatest place  
To her presence be a grace :  
And the blackest discontents  
To be pleasing ornaments.  
In my former days of bliss,  
Her divine skill taught me this,  
That from everything I saw,  
I could some invention draw :  
And raise pleasure to her height,  
Through the meanest object's sight,  
By the murmur of a spring,  
Or the least bough's rustleing ;  
By a daisy, whose leaves spread  
Shut when Titan goes to bed ;  
Or a shady bush or tree,

She could more infuse in me,  
Than all Nature's beauties can  
In some other wiser man.

She hath taught me by her might  
To draw comfort and delight.  
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,  
I will cherish thee for this.  
Poesy! thou sweet'st content  
That e'er heaven to mortals lent:

Let my life no longer be  
Than I am in love with thee.

“Philarète.”

JAMES SHIRLEY. 1594—1666.

. . . but I hope  
You have no enmity to the liberal arts:  
Learning is an addition beyond  
Nobility of birth; honour of blood,  
Without the ornament of knowledge,  
Is but a glorious ignorance. . . .

. . . . I never knew  
More sweet and happy hours than I employ'd  
Upon my books.

“The Lady of Pleasure,” Act ii. Scene 1.

SIR WILLIAM WALLER, PARLIAMEN-  
TARIAN GENERAL. 1597—1668.

Here is the best solitary company in the  
world, and in this particular chiefly excel-  
ling any other, that in my study I am sure to  
converse with none but wise men; but abroad  
it is impossible for me to avoid the society

of fools. What an advantage have I, by this good fellowship, that, besides the help which I receive from hence, in reference to my life after this life, I can enjoy the life of so many ages before I lived!—that I can be acquainted with the passages of three or four thousand years ago, as if they were the weekly occurrences! Here, without travelling so far as Endor, I can call up the ablest spirits of those times, the learnedest philosophers, the wisest counsellors, the greatest generals, and make them serviceable to me. I can make bold with the best jewels they have in their treasury, with the same freedom that the Israelites borrowed of the Egyptians, and, without suspicion of felony, make use of them as mine own. I can here, without trespassing, go into their vineyards and not only eat my fill of their grapes for my pleasure, but put up as much as I will in my vessel, and store it up for my profit and advantage. . . I would therefore do in reading as merchants used to do in their trading; who, in a coasting way, put in at several ports and take in what commodities they afford, but settle their factories in those places only which are of special note; I would, by-the-bye, allow myself a traffic with sundry authors, as I happen to light upon them, for my recreation; and I would make the best advantage that I could of them: but I would fix my study upon those only that are of most importance to fit me for action, which is the true end of all learning. Lord, teach me so to study other men's works

as not to neglect mine own; and so to study Thy word, which is Thy work, that it may be "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"—my candle to work by. Take me off from the curiosity of knowing only to know; from the vanity of knowing only to be known; and from the folly of pretending to know more than I do know: and let it be my wisdom to study to know Thee, who art life eternal. Write Thy law in my heart, and I shall be the best book here.—"Divine Meditations." "Meditation upon the contentment I have in my Books and Study."

FRANCESCO DI RIOJA. 1600—1659.

A little peaceful home  
Bounds all my wants and wishes; add to this  
My book and friend, and this is happiness.

DR. JOHN EARLE, BISHOP OF  
SALISBURY. 1601—1665.

The hermitage by his study has made him somewhat uncouth in the world . . . but practice him a little in men, and brush him over with good company, and he shall out-balance those glisterers, as far as a solid substance does a feather, or gold, gold-lace.—"Microcosmography: A Down-right Scholar."

SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT. 1605—1668.

Books shew the utmost conquests of our  
minds. "Gondibert."

DR. THOMAS FULLER. 1608—1661.

When there is no recreation or business for thee abroad, thou may'st have a company of honest old fellows in their leathern jackets in thy study which will find thee excellent divertisement at home. . . . To divert at any time a troublesome fancy, run to thy books; they presently fix thee to them, and drive the other out of thy thoughts. They always receive thee with the same kindness.—“The Holy State, and The Profane State.”

JOHN MILTON. 1608—1674.

For Books are not absolutely dead things, but doe contain a potencie of Life in them to be as active as that Soule was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve, as in a violl the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous Dragons teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand unlesse warinesse be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills Reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a Man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose

to a Life beyond Life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a Life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected Truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd Life of Man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyr-dome; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall Life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of Reason it selfe, slaies an Immortality rather than a Life.—*"Areopagitica."* [Edition with Notes, &c., by T. Holt White, 1819.]

Who reads  
Incessantly, and to his reading brings  
not  
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,  
Uncertain and unsettled still remains;  
Deep-versed in books, but shallow in himself.

*"Paradise Regained."*

OWEN FELTHAM: 1610—1678.

All endeavours aspire to eminency: all eminencies do beget an admiration. And this makes me believe that contemplative admiration is a large part of the worship of

the Deity. Nothing can carry us so near to God and heaven as this. The mind can walk beyond the sight of the eye; and (though in a cloud) can lift us into heaven while we live. Meditation is the soul's perspective glass: whereby, in her long remove, she discerneth God, as if He were nearer hand. I persuade no man to make it his whole life's business. We have bodies, as well as souls. And even this world, while we are in it, ought somewhat to be cared for: contemplation generates; action propagates. St. Bernard compares contemplation to Rachel, which was the more fair; but action to Leah, which was the more fruitful. I will neither always be busy and doing, nor ever shut up in nothing but thoughts. Yet, that which some would call idleness, I will call the sweetest part of my life: and that is—my thinking.—“Resolves.”

GILES MÉNAGE. 1613—1692.

The following sentence from *Menage* (“*Ménagiana*,” vol. iv.) forms part of David Garrick's book-plate, of which the compiler has one:—

La première chose qu'on doit faire quand on a emprunté un Livre, c'est de le lire, afin de pouvoir le rendre plutôt.

[The first thing one ought to do, after having borrowed a book, is to read it, so as to be able to return it as soon as possible.]

In the “*Ménagiana*” is a good pendant to the above:—



M. Toinard dit que la raison pour laquelle on rend si peu les livres pretez : c'est qu'il est plus aisé de les rétenir que ce qui est dedans.

[M. Toinard says that the reason why borrowed books are seldom returned, is because it is easier to retain the books themselves than what is inside of them.]

RICHARD BAXTER (NONCONFORMIST  
DIVINE). 1615—1691.

But books have the advantage in many other respects: you may read an able preacher, when you have but a mean one to hear. Every congregation cannot hear the most judicious or powerful preachers; but every single person may read the books of the most powerful and judicious. Preachers may be silenced or banished, when books may be at hand: books may be kept at a smaller charge than preachers: we may choose books which treat of that very subject which we desire to hear of; but we cannot choose what subject the preacher shall treat of. Books we may have at hand every day and hour; when we can have sermons but seldom, and at set times. If sermons be forgotten, they are gone. But a book we may read over and over until we remember it; and, if we forget it, may again peruse it at our pleasure, or at our leisure. So that good books are a very great mercy to the world.—“Christian Directory,” Part i., Chapter ii.

As for play-books, and romances, and idle tales, I have already shewed in my "Book of Self-Denial," how pernicious they are, especially to youth, and to frothy, empty, idle wits, that know not what a man is, nor what he hath to do in the world. They are powerful baits of the devil, to keep more necessary things out of their minds, and better books out of their hands, and to poison the mind so much the more dangerously, as they are read with more delight and pleasure: and to fill the minds of sensual people with such idle fumes and intoxicating fancies, as may divert them from the serious thoughts of their salvation: and (which is no small loss) to rob them of abundance of that precious time, which was given them for more important business; and which they will wish and wish again at last that they had spent more wisely.—"Christian Directory," Part i., Direction xvi.

Because God hath made the excellent holy writings of his servants the singular blessing of this land and age, and many an one may have a good book even any day or hour of the week, that cannot at all become a good preacher; I advise all God's servants to be thankful for so great a mercy, and to make use of it, and be much in reading; for reading with most doth more conduce to knowledge than hearing doth, because you may choose what subjects and the most excellent treatises you please

and may be often at it, and may peruse again and again what you forget, and may take time as you go to fix it on your mind: and with very many it doth more than hearing also to move the heart, though hearing of itself, in this hath the advantage; because lively books may be more easily had, than lively preachers. . . . The truth is, it is not the reading of many books which is necessary to make a man wise or good; but the well-reading of a few, could he be sure to have the best. And it is not possible to read over many on the same subject in great deal of loss of precious time.—“*Christian Directory*,” Part ii., Chapter xvi.

. . . And yet the reading of as many as is possible tendeth much to the increase of knowledge, and were the best way, if greater matters were not that way unavoidably to be omitted; life therefore being short, and work great, and knowledge being for love and practice, and no man having leisure to learn all things, a wise man must be sure to lay hold on that which is most useful . . . and the very subjects that are to be understood are numerous, and few men write of all. And on the same subject men have several modes of writing; as one excelleth in accurate method, and another in clear, convincing argumentation, and another in an affectionate, taking style: and the same book that doth one, cannot well do the other, because the same style will not do it.—“*Christian Directory*,” Part iii., Question clxxiv.

Great store of all sorts of good books (through the great mercy of God) are common among us: he that cannot buy, may borrow. But take heed that you lose not your time in reading romances, play-books, vain jests, seducing or reviling disputes, or needless controversies. This course of reading Scripture and good books will be many ways to your great advantage. (1.) It will, above all other ways, increase your knowledge. (2.) It will help your resolutions and holy affections, and direct your lives. (3.) It will make your lives pleasant. The knowledge, the usefulness, and the variety to be found in these works, will be a continual recreation to you, unless you are utterly besotted or debauched. (4.) The pleasure of this will turn you from your fleshly pleasures. You will have no need to go for delight to a play-house, a drinking-house . . . (5.) It will keep you from the sinful loss of time, by idleness or unprofitable employment or pastimes. You will cast away cards and dice, when you find the sweetness of youthful learning. —“Compassionate Counsel to Young Men.”

SIR JOHN DENHAM. 1615—1668.

Books should to one of these four ends conduce :

For wisdom, poetry, delight, or use.

Translation of “The Four Cardinal Virtues: Of Prudence,” by Mancini, a contemporary of Petrarch.

ABRAHAM COWLEY. 1618—1667.

. . . In the second place he [the man who is to make himself capable of the good of solitude,] must learn the art and get the habit of thinking; for this too, no less than well speaking, depends upon much practice; and cogitation is the thing which distinguishes the solitude of a god from a wild beast. Now, because the soul of man is not by its own nature or observation furnished with sufficient materials to work upon, it is necessary for it to have continual recourse to learning and books for fresh supplies, so that the solitary life will grow indigent, and be ready to starve, without them; but if once we be thoroughly engaged in the love of letters, instead of being wearied with the length of any day, we shall only complain of the shortness of our whole life.

“O vita, stulto longa, sapienti brevis !”  
[O life, long to the fool, short to the wise !]

The first minister of state has not so much business in public, as a wise man has in private: if the one have little leisure to be alone, the other has less leisure to be in company; the one has but part of the affairs of one nation, the other all the works of God and nature under his consideration. There is no saying shocks me so much as that which I hear very often, “that a man

does not know how to pass his time." It would have been but ill spoken by Methusalem in the nine hundred sixty-ninth year of his life; so far it is from us, who have not time enough to attain to the utmost perfection of any part of any science, to have cause to complain that we are forced to be idle for want of work. But this, you will say, is work only for the learned; others are not capable either of the employments or divertisements that arrive from letters. I know they are not; and therefore cannot much recommend solitude to a man totally illiterate. But, if any man be so unlearned, as to want entertainment of the little intervals of accidental solitude, which frequently occur in almost all conditions (except the very meanest of the people, who have business enough in the necessary provisions for life,) it is truly a great shame both to his parents and himself; for a very small portion of any ingenious art will stop up all those gaps of our time: either music, or painting, or designing, or chemistry, or history, or gardening, or twenty other things, will do it usefully and pleasantly; and, if he happen to set his affections upon poetry (which I do not advise him too immoderately), that will over-do it; no wood will be thick enough to hide him from the importunities of company or business, which would abstract him from his beloved.—"Essays: Of Solitude."

As far as my memory can return back

into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing, what the world, or the glories or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves, and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays, and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them, and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar; in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercise out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now, (which, I confess, I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode, which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish; but of this part, which I here set down (if a very little were corrected), I should hardly now be much ashamed.

This only grant me; that my means may lie  
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.

Some honour I would have,  
 Not from great deeds, but good alone;  
 The unknown are better than ill known:  
 Rumour can ope the grave.  
 Acquaintance I would have, but when 't  
     depends  
 Not on the number, but the choice, of  
     friends.

Books should, not business, entertain the  
     light;  
 And sleep, as undisturb'd as death, the night.  
 My house a cottage more  
 Than palace; and should fitting be  
 For all my use, not luxury.  
 My garden painted o'er  
 With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures  
     yield,  
 Horace might envy in his Sabine field.  
 Thus would I double my life's fading space;  
 For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.  
 And in this true delight,  
 These unbought sports, this happy state,  
 I would not fear, nor wish, my fate;  
 But boldly say each night;  
 To-morrow let my sun his beams display,  
 Or in clouds hide them; I have lived to-day.

. . . . .

With these affections of mind, and my  
 heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the  
 university; but was soon torn from thence  
 by that violent public storm, which would  
 suffer nothing to stand where it did, but  
 rooted up every plant, even from the princely



cedars to me the hyssop. Yet, I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses, of the world. Now, though I was here engaged in way, most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant (for that was the state then of the English and French courts); yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty, which I did not fall in love with, when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me, when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well; but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it: a storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere; though I was in business of great and honourable trust; though I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses; yet I

could not abstain from renewing my old school-boy's wish, in a copy of verses to the same effect :

"Well then ; I now do plainly see  
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree," &c.

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from his majesty's happy restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country ; which I thought, in that case, I might easily have compassed as well as some others, with no greater probabilities or pretences, have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. . . . However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on ; I cast myself into it a *corps perdu*, without making capitulations, or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who says to his soul, "Take thy ease:" I met presently not only with many little encumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine : yet I do neither repent, or alter my course, "Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum ;" nothing shall separate me from a mistress which I have loved so long, and have now at last married ; though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I hoped from her :

— Nec vos, dulcissima mundi  
Nomina, vos, Musæ, Libertas, Otia, Libri,  
Hortique Silvæque, animâ remanente, re-  
linquam.

Nor by me e'er shall you,  
You, of all names the sweetest and the best,  
You Muses, books, and liberty, and rest ;  
You, gardens, fields, and woods, forsaken be  
As long as life itself forsakes not me.

But this is a very pretty [ejaculation !  
Because I have concluded all the other  
chapters with a copy of verses, I will main-  
tain the humour to the last.—“Essays: Of  
Myself.”

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE. 1628—1698.

Books, like proverbs, receive their chief  
value from the stamp and esteem of ages  
through which they have passed.—“Essays:  
On Ancient and Modern Learning.”

CHARLES COTTON. 1630—1687.

[The friend of Isaac Walton, and Translator  
of Montaigne's Essays.]

Who from the busy World retires,  
To be more useful to it still,  
And to no greater good aspires  
But only the eschewing ill.  
Who, with his Angle, and his Books,  
Can think the longest day well spent,  
And praises God when back he looks,  
And finds that all was innocent.

This man is happier far than he  
Whose public Business oft betrays  
Through labyrinths of Policy,  
To crooked and forbidden ways.

Poems: "Contentation." Directed to  
my Dear Father, and most Worthy  
Friend, Mr. Isaac Walton.

JOHN LOCKE. 1632—1704.

Education begins the gentleman, but  
reading, good company, and reflection must  
finish him.

Those who have read of everything are  
thought to understand everything too; but  
it is not always so—Reading furnishes the  
mind only with materials of knowledge; it  
is thinking that makes what are read over.  
We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not  
enough to cram ourselves with a great load  
of collections; unless we chew them over  
again, they will not give us strength and  
nourishment.

LA BRUYERE. 1639—1696.

Where a book raises your spirit, and in-  
spires you with noble and courageous feel-  
ings, seek for no other rule to judge the  
event by; it is good and made by a good  
workman.

JEREMY COLLIER (NONJURING  
BISHOP). 1650—1726.

The Diversions of Reading, though they  
are not always of the strongest Kind, yet

they generally Leave a better Effect than the grosser Satisfactions of Sense : For if they are well chosen, they neither dull the Appetite, nor strain the Capacity. On the contrary, they refresh the Inclinations, and strengthen the Power, and improve under Experiment : And which is best of all, they Entertain and Perfect at the same time ; and convey Wisdom and Knowledge through Pleasure. By Reading a Man does as it were Antedate his Life, and makes himself contemporary with the Ages past. And this way of running up beyond ones Nativity, is much better than Plato's Pre-existence ; because here a Man knows something of the State, and is the wiser for it ; which he is not in the other.

In conversing with Books we may chuse our Company, and disengage without Ceremony or Exception. Here we are free from the Formalities of Custom, and Respect : We need not undergo the Penance of a dull Story, from a Fop of Figure ; but may shake off the Haughty, the Impertinent, and the Vain, at Pleasure. Besides, Authors, like Women, commonly Dress when they make a Visit. Respect to themselves makes them polish their Thoughts, and exert the Force of their Understanding more than they would, or can do, in ordinary Conversation : So that the Reader has as it were the Spirit and Essence in a narrow Compass ; which was drawn off from a much larger Proportion of Time, Labour, and Expence. Like an Heir, he is born rather than made Rich

and comes into a Stock of Sense, with little or no Trouble of his own. 'Tis true, a Fortune in Knowledge which Descends in this manner, as well as an inherited Estate, is too often neglected, and squandered away; because we do not consider the Difficulty in Raising it.

Books are a Guide in Youth, and an Entertainment for Age. They support us under Solitude, and keep us from being a Burthen to our selves. They help us to forget the Crossness of Men and Things; compose our Cares, and our Passions; and lay our Disappointments asleep. When we are weary of the Living, we may repair to the Dead, who have nothing of Peevishness, Pride, or Design, in their Conversation. However, to be constantly in the Wheel has neither Pleasure nor Improvement in it. A Man may as well expect to grow stronger by always Eating, as wiser by always Reading. Too much over-charges Nature, and turns more into Disease than Nourishment. 'Tis Thought and Digestion which makes Books serviceable, and gives Health and Vigour to the Mind. Neither ought we to be too Implicit or Resigning to Authorities, but to examine before we Assent, and preserve our Reason in its just Liberties. To walk always upon Crutches, is the way to lose the Use of our Limbs. Such an absolute Submission keeps us in a perpetual Minority, breaks the Spirits of the Understanding, and lays us open to Imposture.

But Books well managed afford Direction,

and Discovery. They strengthen the Organ, and enlarge the Prospect, and give a more universal Insight into Things, than can be learned from unlettered Observation. He who depends only upon his own Experience, has but a few Materials to work upon. He is confined to narrow Limits both of Place and Time: And is not fit to draw a large Model, and to pronounce upon Business which is complicated and unusual. There seems to be much the same difference between a Man of meer Practice, and another of Learning, as there is between an Empirick and a Physician. The first may have a good Receipt, or two; and if Diseases and Patients were very scarce, and all alike, he might do tolerably well. But if you enquire concerning the Causes of Distempers, the Constitution of human Bodies, the Danger of Symptoms, and the Methods of Cure, upon which the Success of Medicine depends, he knows little of the Matter. On the other side: To take Measures wholly from Books, without looking into Men and Business, is like travelling in a Map, where though Countries and Cities are well enough distinguished, yet Villages and private Seats are either Over-looked, or too generally Marked for a Stranger to find. And therefore he that would be a Master, must Draw by the Life, as well as Copy from Originals, and joyn Theory and Experience together.—  
“Essays upon Several Moral Subjects: Of the Entertainment of Books.”

## ARCHBISHOP FENELON. 1651—1715.

If the crowns of all the kingdoms of the Empire were laid down at my feet in exchange for my books and my love of reading, I would spurn them all.

## WILLIAM CONGREVE. 1670—1729.

Read, read, sirrah, and refuse your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind, and mortify your flesh: read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes, shut up your mouth, and chew the cud of understanding.—“Love for Love.”

## SIR RICHARD STEELE. 1671—1729.

Reading is to the mind, what exercise is to the body. As by the one, health is preserved, strengthened, and invigorated; by the other, virtue (which is the health of the mind) is kept alive, cherished and confirmed. But as exercise becomes tedious and painful, when we make use of it only as the means of health, so reading is apt to grow uneasy and burthensome when we apply ourselves to it for our improvement in virtue. For this reason, the virtue which we gather from a fable or an allegory, is like the health we get by hunting; as we are engaged in an agreeable pursuit that draws us on with pleasure, and makes us insensible of the fatigues that accompany it.—“The Tatler,” No. 147. ^



## JOSEPH ADDISON. 1672—1719.

Aristotle tells us, that the world is a copy or transcript of those ideas which are in the mind of the first Being, and that those ideas which are in the mind of man, are a transcript of the world. To this we may add, that words are the transcript of those ideas which are in the mind of man and that writing or printing are the transcript of words. As the Supreme Being has expressed, and as it were printed his ideas in the creation, men express their ideas in books, which by this great invention of these latter ages may last as long as the sun and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. . . . There is no other method of fixing those thoughts which arise and disappear in the mind of man, and transmitting them to the last periods of time; no other method of giving a permanency to our ideas, and preserving the knowledge of any particular period, when his body is mixed with the common mass of matter, and his soul retired into the world of spirits. Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn. Knowledge of books in a man of business is a torch in the hands of one who is willing and able to show those who are bewildered, the way which leads to prosperity and welfare.—  
“Spectator,” No. 165.

DR. ISAAC WATTS. 1674—1748.

By reading, we acquaint ourselves, in a very extensive manner, with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of the living and the dead, in the most remote actions, and in the most distant ages; and that with as much ease as though they lived in our own age and nation. By reading of books, we may learn something, from all parts, of mankind; whereas, by observation we learn all from ourselves, and only what comes within our own direct cognisance. By conversation we can only enjoy the unction of a very few persons, those who are moving, and live at the same time that we do—that is, our neighbours and contemporaries.—“On the Improvement of the Mind.”

DR. CONYERS MIDDLETON.

1683—1750.

I persuade myself that the life and faculties of man, at the best but short and limited, cannot be employed more rationally or landably than in the search of knowledge; and especially of that sort which relates to our duty, and conduces to our happiness. In these enquiries, therefore, wherever I perceive any glimmering of truth before me, I readily pursue and endeavour to trace it to its source, without any reserve or caution of pushing the discovery too far, or opening too great a glare of it to the public. I look upon the discovery of anything which is true

as a valuable acquisition of society, which cannot possibly hurt or obstruct the good effect of any other truth whatsoever; for they all partake of one common essence, and necessarily coincide with each other; and like the drops of rain which fall separately into the river, mix themselves at once with the stream, and strengthen the general current.—“Miscellaneous Works.”

ALEXANDER POPE. 1688—1744.

At this day, as much company as I have kept, and as much as I love it, I love reading better—I would rather be employed in reading than in the most agreeable conversation.—“Spence’s Anecdotes.”

BARON MONTESQUIEU. 1689—1755.

Aimer à lire, c’est faire in échange des heures d’ennui que l’on doit avoir en sa vie contre des heures délicieuses.

[Love of reading enables a man to exchange the weary hours which come to everyone, for hours of delight.]

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGUE.

1690—1762.

I yet retain, and carefully cherish my love of reading. If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but silent companions: they afford a

constant variety of entertainment, which is almost the only one pleasing in the enjoyment, and inoffensive in the consequence. . . . Every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she never will appear: and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement, to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. . . . Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, and stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing

some, and extracting praise from others to no purpose; eternally disappointing and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I could confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a pooker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage; I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion: he fortifies his health by exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends.—“*Letters*,” 1752-7.

MATTHEW GREEN. 1696—1737.

And shorten tedious hours with books.

“*The Spleen*.”

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON. 1709—1784.

Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I

myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in the day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge.

He then took occasion to enlarge on the advantages of reading, and combated the idle, superficial notion, that knowledge enough may be acquired in conversation. "The foundation," said he, "must be laid by reading." General principles must be had from books, which, however, must be brought to the test of real life. In conversation you never get a system. What is said upon a subject is to be gathered from a hundred people. The parts of a truth, which a man gets thus, are at such a distance from each other that he never attains a full view.

He said, that for general improvement a man should read whatever his immediate inclination prompts him to; though, to be wise, if a man have a science to learn, he must regularly and resolutely advance. He added, "what we read with inclination works a much stronger impression." If we read without inclination, half the mind is employed in fixing the attention; so there is but one half to be employed on what we read. He told us he read Fielding's "Amelia" through without stopping. He said, "If a man begins to read in the middle of a book, and feels an inclination to go on, let him

not quit it, to go to the beginning. He may perhaps not feel again the inclination."

Books that can be held in the hand, and carried to the fireside, are the best after all.—  
[Reported by Boswell.]

DENIS DIDEROT. 1713—1789.

Sentences are like sharp nails, which force truth upon us.

LAURENCE STERNE. 1713—1768.

Digressions incontestably are the sunshine; they are the life, the soul of reading.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE. 1714—1763.

I hate a style, as I do a garden, that is wholly flat and regular; that slides along like an eel, and never rises to what one can call an inequality.—"Essays: On Writing and Books."

HORACE WALPOLE. 1717—1797.

Without grace no book can live, and with it the poorest may have its life prolonged.  
. . . I sometimes wish for a catalogue of lounging books—books that one takes up in the gout, low spirits, *ennui*, or when in waiting for company. Some novels, gay poetry, odd whimsical authors, as Rabelais, &c. A *catalogue raisonne* of such might be itself a good lounging book.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. 1728—1774.

There is improbable pleasure attending the life of a voluntary student. The first time I read an excellent book, it is to me just as if I had gained a new friend; when I read over a book I have perused before, it resembles the meeting with an old one. —“Citizen of the World.”

“In England, where there are as many new books published as in all the rest of Europe put together, a spirit of freedom and reason reigns among the people; they have been often known to act like fools, they are generally found to think like men. . . . An author may be considered as a merciful substitute to the legislature. He acts not by punishing crimes, but by preventing them.”

REV. DR. WILLIAM DODD. 1729—  
1777.

[Executed for Forgery.]

Books, dear books,  
Have been, and are my comforts, morn and  
night,  
Adversity, prosperity, at home,  
Abroad, health, sickness,—good or ill report,  
The same firm friends; the same refresh-  
ments rich,  
And source of consolation.

“Thoughts in Prison.”



DR. JOHN MOORE. 1730—1802.

It can hardly be conceived how life, short as it is, can be passed without many intervals of tedium, by those who have not their bread to earn, if they could not call in the assistance of our worthy mute friends, the Books. Horses, hounds, the theatres, cards, and the bottle, are all of use occasionally, no doubt; but the weather may forbid the two first; a kind of nonsense may drive us from the third; the association of others is necessary for the fourth, and also for the fifth, unless to those who are already sunk into the lowest state of wretchedness and degradation: but the entertainment which BOOKS afford, can be enjoyed in the worst weather, can be varied as we please, obtained in solitude, and instead of blunting, it sharpens the understanding; but the most valuable effect of a taste for reading is, that it often preserves us from bad company. For those are not apt to go or remain with disagreeable people abroad, who are always certain of a pleasant party at home.—“*Beauties of Dr. John Moore,*” by the Rev. F. Prevost and F. Blagden, 1803.

WILLIAM COWPER. 1731—1800.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,  
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,  
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn

Throws up a steamy column, and the cups  
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,  
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

. . . . .  
'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of re-  
treat

To peep at such a world. To see the stir  
Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.  
To hear the roar she sends through all her  
gates

At a safe distance, where the dying sound  
Falls in soft murmur on the uninjured ear.  
Thus sitting and surveying them at ease  
The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced  
To some secure and more than mortal height,  
That liberates and exempts me from them  
all.

. . . . .  
Oh Winter! ruler of the inverted year,  
Thy scatter'd hair with sleet-like ashes fill'd,  
Thy breath congeal'd upon thy lips, thy  
cheeks

Fringed with a beard made white with  
other snows

Than those of age; thy forehead wrapt in  
clouds,

A leafless branch thy sceptre, and thy throne  
A sliding car indebted to no wheels,  
But urged by storms along its slippery way;  
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st  
And dreaded as thou art. . . .

I crown thee King of intimate delight,  
Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness,  
And all the comforts that the lowly roof  
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the boreas

Of lonely uninterrupted evening hour.  
          . . . . .

Come evening once again, season of peace,  
Return sweet evening, and continue long!  
          . . . . .

Come then, and thou shalt find thy votary  
calm

Or make me so. Composure is thy gift.  
And whether I devote thy gentle hours  
To books, to music, or the poet's toil,  
          . . . . .

I slight thee not, but make thee welcome  
still.  
          . . . . .

How calm is my recess ! and how the frost  
Raging abroad, and the rough wind endear  
The silence and the warmth enjoy'd within.

“The Task,” Book iv., The Winter  
Evening.

Books are not seldom talismans and spells:

“The Task,” Book vi., The Winter  
Walk at Noon.

EDWARD GIBBON. 1737—1794.

A taste for books is the pleasure and glory  
of my life . . . I would not exchange it  
for the wealth of the Indies. . . . The  
miseries of a vacant life are never known to  
a man whose hours are insufficient for the  
inexhaustible pleasures of study. . . . The  
love of study, a passion which derives great  
vigour from enjoyment, supplies each day,

each hour, with a perpetual round of independent and rational pleasure.—“Autobiography.”

DANIEL WYTTENBACH. 1746—1820.

There is no business, no avocation whatever, which will not permit a man, who has the inclination, to give a little time, every day, to study.

DR. JOHN AIKIN. 1747—1822.

At the head of all the pleasures which offer themselves to the man of liberal education, may confidently be placed that derived from *books*. In variety, durability, and facility of attainment, no other can stand in competition with it; and even in intensity it is inferior to few. Imagine that we had it in our power to call up the shades of the greatest and wisest men that ever existed, and oblige them to converse with us on the most interesting topics—what an inestimable privilege should we think it!—how superior to all common enjoyments! But in a well-furnished library we, in fact, possess this power. We can question Xenophon and Cæsar on their campaigns, make Demosthenes and Cicero plead before us, join in the audiences of Socrates and Plato, and receive demonstrations from Euclid and Newton. In books we have the choicest thoughts of the ablest men

in their best dress. We can at pleasure exclude dulness and impertinence, and open our doors to wit and good sense alone. It is needless to repeat the high commendations that have been bestowed on the study of letters by persons, who had free access to every other source of gratification. Instead of quoting Cicero to you, I shall in plain terms give you the result of my own experience on this subject. If domestic enjoyments have contributed in the first degree to the happiness of my life (and I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge that they have), the pleasures of reading have beyond all question held the second place. Without books I have never been able to pass a single day to my entire satisfaction: with them, no day has been so dark as not to have its pleasure. Even pain and sickness have for a time been charmed away by them. By the easy provision of a book in my pocket, I have frequently worn through long nights and days in the most disagreeable parts of my profession, with all the difference in my feelings between calm content and fretful impatience. Such occurrences have afforded me full proof both of the possibility of being cheaply pleased, and of the consequence it is of to the sum of human felicity, not to neglect minute attentions to make the most of life as it passes.

Reading may in every sense be called a *cheap* amusement. A *taste for books*, indeed, may be made expensive enough; but that is a taste for editions, bindings, paper, and

type. If you are satisfied with getting at the sense of an author, in some commodious way, a crown at a stall will supply your wants as well as a guinea at a shop. Learn, too, to distinguish between books to be *perused*, and books to be *possessed*. Of the former you may find an ample store in every subscription library, the proper use of which to a scholar is to furnish his mind without loading his shelves. No apparatus, no appointment of time and place, is necessary for the enjoyment of reading. From the midst of bustle and business you may, in an instant, by the magic of a book, plunge into scenes of remote ages and countries. and disengage yourself from present care and fatigue. "Sweet pliability of man's spirit, (cries Sterne, on relating an occurrence of this kind in his *Sentimental Journey*) that can at once surrender itself to illusions which cheat expectation and sorrow of their weary moments!"—"Letters from a Father to his Son."

WILLIAM ROSCOE. 1753—1831.

*To my Books on Parting with Them.*

As one who, destined from his friends to part,  
 Regrets his loss, yet hopes again erewhile  
 To share their converse and enjoy their smile,  
 And tempers as he may affliction's dart,—  
 Thus, loved associates! chiefs of elder Art!

Teachers of wisdom ! who could once be-  
guile  
My tedious hours, and lighten every toil,  
I now resign you : nor with fainting heart ;  
For pass a few short years, or days, or  
hours,  
And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,  
And all your sacred fellowship restore ;  
When, freed from earth, unlimited its  
powers,  
Mind shall with mind direct communion  
hold,  
And kindred spirits meet to part no more.

MRS. INCHBALD. 1753—1821.

Here, in the country, my books are my sole occupation ; books my sure solace, and refuge from frivolous cares. Books are the calmers as well as the instruction of the mind.—“ Letters.”

WILLIAM GODWIN. 1756—1836.

Books are the depositary of every thing that is most honourable to man. Literature, taken in all its bearings, forms the grand line of demarcation between the human and the animal kingdoms. He that loves reading, has everything within his reach. He has but to desire ; and he may possess himself of every species of wisdom to judge, and power to perform. . . . Books gratify and excite our curiosity in innumer-

able ways. They force us to reflect. They hurry us from point to point. They present direct ideas of various kinds, and they suggest indirect ones. In a well-written book we are presented with the maturest reflections, or the happiest flights, of a mind of uncommon excellence. It is impossible that we can be much accustomed to such companions, without attaining some resemblance of them. When I read Thomson, I become Thomson; when I read Milton, I become Milton. I find myself a sort of intellectualameleon, assuming the colour of the substances on which I rest. He that revels in a well-chosen library, has innumerable dishes, and all of admirable flavour. His taste is rendered so acute, as easily to distinguish the nicest shades of difference. His mind becomes ductile, susceptible to every impression, and gaining new refinement from them all. His varieties of thinking baffle calculation, and his powers, whether of reason or fancy, become eminently vigorous.—“The Enquirer: Of an Early Taste for Reading.”

SIR S. EGERTON BRYDGES.

1762—1837.

Are books, in truth, a dead letter? To those who have no bright mirror in their own bosoms to reflect their images, they are! but the lively and active scenes, which they call forth in well-framed minds, exceed



the liveliness of reality. Heads and hearts of a coarser grain require the substance of material objects to put them in motion. Books instruct us calmly, and without intermingling with their instruction any of those painful impressions of superiority, which we must necessarily feel from a living instructor. They wait the pace of each man's capacity; stay for his want of perception, without reproach; go backward and forward with him at his wish; and furnish inexhaustible repetitions. How is it possible to express what owe we, as intellectual beings, to the art of printing? When a man sits in a well furnished library, surrounded by the collected wisdom of thousands of the best endowed minds, of various ages and countries, what an amazing extent of mental range does he command. Every age, and every language, has some advantages, some excellencies peculiar to itself! I am not sure, that skill in a variety of tongues is always wisdom; but an acquaintance with various forms of expression, and the operations and results of minds at various times, and under various circumstances of climate, manners and government, must necessarily enrich and strengthen our opinions. A person, who is only conversant with the literature of his own country, and that during only the last ten or twenty years, contracts so narrow a taste, that every other form of phrase, or mode of composition, every other fashion of sentiment, or intellectual process, appears

to him repulsive, dull and worthless. He reads Spenser, and Milton, if he reads them at all, only as a task; and he turns with disgust from the eloquence of Sydney, Hooker, and Jeremy Taylor. . . . Above all, there is this value in books, that they enable us to converse with the dead. There is something in this beyond the mere intrinsic worth of what they have left us. When a person's body is mouldering, cold and insensible, in the grave, we feel a sacred sentiment of veneration for the living memorials of his mind.—“*The Ruminator*,” No. 22, “Books.”

The contempt of many of the innocent trifles of life, which the generality of the world betray, arises from the weakness and narrowness, and not from the superiority, of their understandings. Most of the empty baubles, which mankind pursue as objects of high consideration, are suffered to eclipse those simple amusements which are in no respect less important, and which are so far more valuable as they are more compatible with purity of heart and conduct! It is from an undue estimate of the points of ordinary ambition, that health, liberty, carelessness of mind, and ease of conscience are sacrificed to the attainment of distinctions, which in the opinion of the truly wise are mere vanity. A just appreciation on the contrary will deem every pursuit, that affords amusement without derogating from virtue, praiseworthy. Of all the

human relaxations which are free from guilt, perhaps there is none so dignified as reading. It is no little good to while away the tediousness of existence in a gentle and harmless exercise of the intellectual faculties. If we build castles in the air that vanish as quickly as the passing clouds, still some beneficial result has been obtained; some hours of weariness have been stolen from us; and probably some cares have been robbed of their sting. I do not here mean to discuss the scale of excellence among the various studies that books afford. It is my purpose to shew that even the most trifling books, which give harmless pleasure, produce a good far exceeding what the world ascribes to more high-sounding occupations. When we recollect of how many it is the lot, even against choice, to pass their days in solitude, how admirable is the substitute for conversation, which the powers of genius and arts of printing bestow!—"The Ruminator," No. 24, "On the Pleasures of Reading."

JEAN PAUL F. RICHTER. 1763—1825.

A scholar has no ennui. . . . In this bridal-chamber of the mind (such are our study-chambers), in this concert-hall of the finest voices gathered from all times and places—the æsthetic and philosophic enjoyments almost overpower the faculty of choice.—"Hesperus."

DR. JOHN FERRIAR. 1764—1815.

Like Poets, born, in vain Collectors strive  
To cross their Fate, and learn the art to  
thrive.

Like CACUS, bent to tame their struggling  
will,

The tyrant-passion drags them backward  
still :

Ev'n I, debarr'd of ease, and studious hours,  
Confess, mid' anxious toil, its lurking pow'rs.  
How pure the joy, when first my hands  
unfold

The small, rare volume, black with tarnish'd  
gold.

“The Bibliomania.” [Annotated  
edition, by Mr. J. E. Bailey, in  
the *Palatine Note-book*, March,  
1882.]

ROBERT SOUTHEY. 1774—1843.

A reader of books is the inheritor of  
whatever has been discovered by persevering  
labour, or created by inventive genius. The  
wise of all ages have heaped up a treasure  
for him, “which rust doth not corrupt, and  
which thieves cannot break through and  
steal.”—“Sir Thomas More—Colloquies.”

My days among the Dead are pass'd ;

Around me I behold,

Where'er these casual eyes are cast,

The mighty minds of old ;

My never-failing friends are they,

With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,  
And seek relief in woe;  
And while I understand and feel  
How much to them I owe,  
My cheeks have often been bedew'd  
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead : with them  
I live in long-past years;  
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,  
Partake their hopes and fears,  
And from their lessons seek and find  
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead, anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all Futurity;  
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,  
That will not perish in the dust.

KESWICK, 1818.

CHARLES LAMB. 1775—1834.

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford,  
what do most arride and solace me, are thy  
repositories of mouldering learning, thy  
shelves—

What a place to be in is an old library !  
It seems as though all the souls of all the  
writers, that have bequeathed their labours  
to these Bodleians, were reposing here, as  
in some dormitory, or middle state. I do  
not want to handle, to profane the leaves,  
their winding-sheets. I could as soon dis-  
lodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning,

walking amid their foliage ; and the odour of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those scintial apples which grew amid the happy orchard. —“Elia’s Essays: Oxford in the Vacation.”

To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers, there is a class of alienators more formidable than that which I have touched upon ; I mean your *borrowers of books*—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes. There is Comberbatch [Coleridge], matchless in his depredations !

That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(yon are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader !)——with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre,—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas), showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart !—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that “the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance), is in exact ratio to the claimant’s powers of understanding and appreciating

the same." Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

The slight vacuum in the left-hand case—two shelves from the ceiling—scarcely distinguishable but by the quick eye of a loser—was whilom the commodious resting-place of Brown on Urn Burial. C. will hardly allege that he knows more about that treatise than I do, who introduced it to him, and was indeed the first (of the moderns) to discover its beauties—but so have I known a foolish lover to praise his mistress in the presence of a rival more qualified to carry her off than himself.—Just below, Dodsley's dramas want their fourth volume, where Vittoria Corombona is! The remainder nine are as distasteful as Priam's refuse sons, when the Fates *borrowed* Hector. Here stood the Anatomy of Melancholy, in sober state.—There loitered the Complete Angler; quiet as in life, by some stream side.—In yonder nook, John Bunclie, a widower-volume, with "eyes closed," mourns his ravished mate.—"Elia's Essays: The Two Races of Men."

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be

said before reading the Fairy Queen?—"Elia's Essays : Grace Before Meat."

In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not ; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances.—"Elia's Essays : Poor Relations."

I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading ; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of *books which are no books—biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards bound and lettered at the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacks, Statutes at Large ; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which "no gentleman's library should be without : " the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost any thing. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.



I confess that it moves my spleen to see these *things in books' clothing* perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what "seem its leaves," to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of blockheaded Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably re-clothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world. I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The dishabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is *our* costume. A Shakspeare, or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling

sense of property in the owner. Thomson's Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn, and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn out appearance, nay, the very odour (beyond Russia,) if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs, that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting content! Who would have them a whit less soiled? What better condition could we desire to see them in?

In some respects the better a book is, the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollet, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we know the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

We know not where is that Promethean  
torch

That can its light relumine—

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the

Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel. . . .

I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them in a winding-sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure? what hapless stationer could dream of Burton ever becoming popular? — The wretched Malone could not do worse, when he bribed the sexton of Stratford church to let him white-wash the painted effigy of old Shakespeare, which stood there, in rude but lively fashion depicted, to the very colour of the cheek, the eye, the eye-brow, hair, the very dress he used to wear—the only authentic testimony we had, however imperfect, of these curious parts and parcels of him. They covered him over with a coat of white paint. By —, if I had been a justice of peace for Warwickshire, I would have clapt both commentator and sexton fast in the stocks, for a pair of meddling sacrilegious varlets.

I think I see them at their work—these sapient trouble-tombs. . . .

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the *Fairy Queen* for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakspeare enters. At such a season, the *Tempest*, or his own *Winter's Tale*— . . .

Coming in to an inn at night—having ordered your supper—what can be more delightful than to find lying in the window-seat, left there time out of mind by the carelessness of some former guest—two or three numbers of the old *Town and Country Magazine*, with its amusing *tête-à-tête* pictures—"The Royal Lover and Lady G—;" "The Melting Platonic and the old Beau,"—and such like antiquated scandal? Would you exchange it—at that time, and in that place—for a better book? . . .

I am not much a friend to out-of-doors reading. I cannot settle my spirits to it. I knew a Unitarian minister, who was generally to be seen upon Snow-hill (as yet Skinner's-street *was not*), between the hours of ten and eleven in the morning, studying a volume of Lardner. I own this to have been a strain of abstraction beyond my reach. I used to admire how he sidled along, keeping clear of secular contacts. An illiterate encounter with a porter's knot, or a bread basket, would have quickly put to flight all the theology I am master of, and have left me worse than indifferent to the five points.

There is a class of street-readers, whom I can never contemplate without affection—the poor gentry, who, not having wherewithal to buy or hire a book, filch a little learning at the open stalls—the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done. Venturing tenderly, page after page, expecting every moment when he shall interpose his interdict, and yet unable to deny themselves the gratification, they “snatch a fearful joy.” Martin B—, in this way, by daily fragments, got through two volumes of *Clarissa*, when the stall-keeper damped his laudable ambition, by asking him (it was in his younger days) whether he meant to purchase the work. M. declares, that under no circumstances of his life did he ever peruse a book with half the satisfaction which he took in those uneasy snatches. —“*Elia's Essays: Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.*”

[*Bridget Elia loquitur*] “I wish the good old times would come again, when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;” so she was pleased to ramble on,—“in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate

two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in Covent-garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o’clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till day-break—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you

flaunted it about in that over-worn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.” — “*Elia's Essays: Old China.*”

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

1775—1864.

O Andrew! Although our learning raiseth up against us many enemies, among the low, and more among the powerful, yet doth it invest us with grand and glorious privileges, and grant to us a largess of beatitude. We enter our studies, and enjoy a society which we alone can bring together. We raise no jealousy by conversing with one in preference to another; we give no offence to the most illustrious by questioning him as long as we will, and leaving him as abruptly. Diversity of opinion raises no tumult in our presence; each interlocutor stands before us, speaks, or is silent, and we adjourn or decide the business at our leisure. Nothing is past which we desire to be present; and we enjoy by anticipation somewhat like the power which I imagine we shall possess hereafter

of sailing on a wish from world to world.—  
“Imaginary Conversations: Milton in conversation with Andrew Marvell.”

Logic, however unperturbed, is not for boys; argument is among the most dangerous of early practices, and sends away both fancy and modesty. The young mind should be nourished with simple and grateful food, and not too copious. It should be little exercised until its nerves and muscles show themselves, and even then rather for air than anything else. Study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of age.—“Pericles and Aspasia, lvii.: Cleone to Aspasia.”

The writings of the wise are the only riches our posterity cannot squander.

WILLIAM HAZLITT. 1778—1830.

They [Books] are the nearest to our thoughts: they wind into the heart; the poet's verse slides into the current of our blood. We read them when young, we remember them when old. We read there of what has happened to others; we feel that it has happened to ourselves. They are to be had every where cheap and good. We breathe but the air of books: we owe every thing to their authors, on this side barbarism; and we pay them easily with contempt, while living, and with an epitaph,



when dead ! . . . there are neither picture-galleries nor theatres-royal on Salisbury-plain, where I write this; but here, even here, with a few old authors, I can manage to get through the summer or the winter months, without ever knowing what it is to feel *ennui*. They sit with me at breakfast; they walk out with me before dinner. After a long walk through unfrequented tracks, after starting the hare from the fern, or hearing the wing of the raven rustling above my head, or being greeted by the woodman's "stern good-night," as he strikes into his narrow homeward path, I can "take mine ease at mine inn," beside the blazing hearth, and shake hands with Signor Orlando Priscobaldo [a character in one of Dekkar's Plays], as the oldest acquaintance I have, Ben Jonson, learned Chapman, Master Webster, and Master Heywood, are there; and seated round, discourse the silent hours away. Shakespear is there himself, not in Cibber's manager's coat. Spenser is hardly yet returned from a ramble through the woods, or is concealed behind a group of nymphs, fawns, and satyrs. Milton lies on the table, as on an altar, never taken up or laid down without reverence. Lyly's Endymion sleeps with the moon, that shines in at the window; and a breath of wind stirring at a distance seems a sigh from the tree under which he grew old. Faustus disputes in one corner of the room with fiendish faces, and reasons of divine astrology. Bellafront soothes Mattheo, Vittoria

triumphs over her judges, and old Chapman repeats one of the hymns of Homer, in his own fine translation! I should have no objection to pass my life in this manner out of the world, not thinking of it, nor it of me; neither abused by my enemies, nor defended by my friends; careless of the future, but sometimes dreaming of the past which might as well be forgotten!—"Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth."

I do not think altogether the worse of a book for having survived the author a generation or two. I have more confidence in the dead than the living. Contemporary writers may generally be divided into two classes—one's friends or one's foes. Of the first we are compelled to think too well, and of the last we are disposed to think too ill, to receive much genuine pleasure from the perusal, or to judge fairly of the merits of either. One candidate for literary fame, who happens to be of our acquaintance, writes finely, and like a man of genius; but unfortunately has a foolish face, which spoils a delicate passage:—another inspires us with the highest respect for his personal talents and character, but does not quite come up to our expectations in print. All these contradictions and petty details interrupt the calm current of our reflections. If you want to know what any of the authors were who lived before our time, and are still objects of anxious inquiry,

you have only to look into their works. But the dust and smoke and noise of modern literature have nothing in common with the pure, silent air of immortality.

When I take up a work that I have read before (the oftener the better) I know what I have to expect. The satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated. When the entertainment is altogether new, I sit down to it as I should to a strange dish,—turn and pick out a bit here and there, and am in doubt what to think of the composition. There is a want of confidence and security to second appetite. New-fangled books are also like made-dishes in this respect, that they are generally little else than hashes and *rifaccimenti* of what has been served up entire and in a more natural state at other times. Besides, in thus turning to a well-known author, there is not only an assurance that my time will not be thrown away, or my palate nauseated with the most insipid or vilest trash,—but I shake hands with, and look an old, tried, and valued friend in the face,—compare notes, and chat the hours away. It is true, we form dear friendships with such ideal guests—dearer, alas! and more lasting, than those with our most intimate acquaintance. In reading a book which is an old favourite with me (say the first novel I ever read) I not only have the pleasure of imagination and of a critical relish of the work, but the pleasures of memory added to it. It recalls the same feelings and associations

which I had in first reading it, and which I can never have again in any other way. Standard productions of this kind are links in the chain of our conscious being. They bind together the different scattered divisions of our personal identity. They are landmarks and guides in our journey through life. They are pegs and loops on which we can hang up, or from which we can take down, at pleasure, the wardrobe of a moral imagination, the relics of our best affections, the tokens and records of our happiest hours. They are "for thoughts and for remembrance!" They are like Fortunatus's Wishing-Cap—they give us the best riches—those of Fancy; and transport us, not over half the globe, but (which is better) over half our lives, at a word's notice!

My father Shandy solaced himself with *Bruscamville*. Give me for this purpose a volume of "*Peregrine Pickle*" or "*Tom Jones*." Open either of them anywhere—at the "*Memoirs of Lady Vane*," or the adventures at the masquerade with Lady Bellaston, or the disputes between Thwacknm and Square, or the escape of Molly Seagrim, or the incident of Sophia and her muff, or the edifying prolixity of her aunt's lecture—and there I find the same delightful, busy, bustling scene as ever, and feel myself the same as when I was first introduced into the midst of it. Nay, sometimes the sight of an odd

volume of these good old English authors on a stall, or the name lettered on the back among others on the shelves of a library, answers the purpose, revives the whole train of ideas, and sets "the puppets dallying." Twenty years are struck off the list, and I am a child again. A sage philosopher, who was not a very wise man, said, that he should like very well to be young again, if he could take his experience along with him. This ingenious person did not seem to be aware, by the gravity of his remark, that the great advantage of being young is to be without this weight of experience, which he would fain place upon the shoulders of youth, and which never comes too late with years. Oh! what a privilege to be able to let this hump, like Christian's burthen, drop from off one's back, and transport oneself, by the help of a little musty duodecimo, to the time when "ignorance was bliss," and when we first got a peep at the raree-show of the world, through the glass of fiction—gazing at mankind, as we do at wild beasts in a menagerie, through the bars of their cages,—or at curiosities in a museum, that we must not touch! For myself, not only are the old ideas of the contents of the work brought back to my mind in all their vividness, but the old associations of the faces and persons of those I then knew, as they were in their lifetime—the place where I sat to read the volume, the day when I got it, the feeling of the air, the fields, the

sky—return, and all my early impressions with them. This is better to me—those places, those times, those persons, and those feelings that come across me as I retrace the story and devour the page, are to me better far than the wet sheets of the last new novel from the Ballantyne press, to say nothing of the Minerva press in Leadenhall Street. It is like visiting the scenes of early youth. I think of the time “when I was in my father’s house, and my path ran down with butter and honey,”—when I was a little, thoughtless child, and had no other wish or care but to con my daily task, and be happy!--“Tom Jones,” I remember, was the first work that broke the spell. It came down in numbers once a fortnight, in Cooke’s pocket-edition, embellished with cuts. I had hitherto read only in school-books, and a tiresome ecclesiastical history (with the exception of Mrs. Radcliffe’s “Romance of the Forest”): but this had a different relish with it,—“sweet in the mouth,” though not “bitter in the belly.” It smacked of the world I lived in, and in which I was to live—and showed me groups, “gay creatures” not “of the element,” but of the earth; not “living in the clouds,” but travelling the same road that I did;—some that had passed on before me, and others that might soon overtake me. My heart had palpitated at the thoughts of a boarding-school ball, or gala-day at Midsummer or Christmas: but the world I had

found out in Cooke's edition of the "British Novelists" was to me a dance through life, a perpetual gala-day. The sixpenny numbers of this work regularly contrived to leave off just in the middle of a sentence, and in the nick of a story. . . . With what eagerness I used to look forward to the next number, and open the prints! Ah! never again shall I feel the enthusiastic delight with which I gazed at the figures, and anticipated the story and adventures of Major Bath and Commodore Trunnion, of Trim and my Uncle Toby, of Don Quixote and Sancho and Dapple, of Gil Blas and Dame Lorenza Sephora, of Laura and the fair Lucretia, whose lips open and shut like buds of roses. To what nameless ideas did they give rise,—with what airy delights I filled up the outlines, as I hung in silence over the page!—Let me still recall them, that they may breathe fresh life into me, and that I may live that birthday of thought and romantic pleasure over again! Talk of the *ideal*! This is the only true ideal—the heavenly tints of Fancy reflected in the bubbles that float upon the spring-tide of human life.

O Memory! shield me from the world's poor  
    strife,  
And give those scenes thine everlasting  
    life!

—“The Plain Speaker: On Reading Old Books.”

I cannot understand the rage manifested by the greater part of the world for reading New Books. If the public had read all those that have gone before, I can conceive how they should not wish to read the same work twice over; but when I consider the countless volumes that lie unopened, unregarded, unread, and unthought-of, I cannot enter into the pathetic complaints that I hear made that Sir Walter writes no more—that the press is idle—that Lord Byron is dead. If I have not read a book before, it is, to all intents and purposes, new to me, whether it was printed yesterday or three hundred years ago. If it be urged that it has no modern, passing incidents, and is out of date and old-fashioned, then it is so much the newer; it is farther removed from other works that I have lately read, from the familiar routine of ordinary life and makes so much more addition to my knowledge. But many people would as soon think of putting on old armour as of taking up a book not published within the last month, or year at the utmost. There is a fashion in reading as well as in dress, which lasts only for the season. One would imagine that books were, like women, the worse for being old; that they have a pleasure in being read for the first time; that they open their leaves more cordially; that the spirit of enjoyment wears out with the spirit of novelty; and that, after a certain age, it is high time to put them on the shelf. This conceit seems to be followed up in practice.



What is it to me that another—that hundreds or thousands have in all ages read a work? Is it on this account the less likely to give me pleasure, because it has delighted so many others? Or can I taste this pleasure by proxy? Or am I in any degree the wiser for their knowledge? Yet this might appear to be the inference.—“Sketches and Essays: On Reading New Books.”

[In the Appendix will be found some opinions regarding Hazlitt as a Critic and Essayist. The object in giving these is to direct attention to the works of an original and vigorous thinker, too little known by readers of the present generation.]

DR. WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.  
1780—1842.

It is chiefly through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds; and these invaluable means of communication are in the reach of all. In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books! They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of past ages. Books are the true levellers. They give to all who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence of the best and greatest of our race. No matter how

poor I am; no matter though the prosperous of my own time will not enter my obscure dwelling; if the sacred writers will enter and take up their abode under my roof—if Milton will cross my threshold to sing to me of Paradise; and Shakspeare to open to me the worlds of imagination and the workings of the human heart; and Franklin to enrich me with his practical wisdom—I shall not pine for want of intellectual companionship, and I may become a cultivated man, though excluded from what is called the best society in the place where I live.

To make this means of culture effectual, a man must select good books, such as have been written by right-minded and strong-minded men, real thinkers; who, instead of diluting by repetition what others say, have something to say for themselves, and write to give relief to full earnest souls: and these works must not be skimmed over for amusement, but read with fixed attention, and a reverential love of truth. In selecting books, we may be aided much by those who have studied more than ourselves. But after all, it is best to be determined in this particular a good deal by our own tastes. The best books for a man are not always those which the wise recommend, but oftener those which meet the peculiar wants, the natural thirst of his mind, and therefore awaken interest and rivet thought. And here it may be well to observe, not only in regard to books, but in other respects, that self-culture must vary with the indi-

vidual. All means do not equally suit us all. A man must unfold himself freely, and should respect the peculiar gifts or biasses by which nature has distinguished him from others. Self-culture does not demand the sacrifice of individuality; it does not regularly apply an established machinery; for the sake of torturing every man into one rigid shape, called perfection. As the human countenance, with the same features in us all, is diversified without end in the race, and is never the same in any two individuals; so the human soul, with the same grand powers and law, expands into an infinite variety of forms, and would be woefully stunted by modes of culture requiring all men to learn the same lesson, or to bend to the same rules.

I know how hard it is to some men, especially to those who spend much time in manual labour, to fix attention on books. Let them strive to overcome the difficulty, by choosing subjects of deep interest, or by reading in company with those whom they love. Nothing can supply the place of books. They are cheering or soothing companions in solitude, illness, affliction. The wealth of both continents would not compensate for the good they impart. Let every man, if possible, gather some good books under his roof, and obtain access for himself and family to some social library. Almost any luxury should be sacrificed to this.

One of the very interesting features of

our times, is the multiplication of books, and their distribution through all conditions of society. At a small expense, a man can now possess himself of the most precious treasures of English literature. Books, once confined to a few by their costliness, are now accessible to the multitude; and in this way a change of habits is going on in society, highly favourable to the culture of the people. Instead of depending on casual rumour and loose conversation for most of their knowledge and objects of thought; instead of forming their judgments in crowds, and receiving their chief excitement from the voice of neighbours, men are now learning to study and reflect alone, to follow out subjects continuously, to determine for themselves what shall engage their minds, and to call to their aid the knowledge, original views, and reasonings of men of all countries and ages; and the results must be, a deliberateness and independence of judgment, and a thoroughness and extent of information, unknown in former times. The diffusion of these silent teachers, books, through the whole community, is to work greater effects than artillery, machinery, and legislation. Its peaceful agency is to supersede stormy revolutions. The culture, which it is to spread, whilst an unspeakable good to the individual, is also to become the stability of nations. — "Self-Culture: An Address introductory to the Franklin Lectures, at Boston," 1838.

## WASHINGTON IRVING. 1783—1859.

The scholar only knows how dear these silent, yet eloquent, companions of pure thoughts and innocent hours become in the season of adversity. When all that is worldly turns to dross around us, these only retain their steady value. When friends grow cold, and the converse of intimates languishes into vapid civility and common-place, these only continue the unaltered countenance of happier days, and cheer us with that true friendship which never deceived hope nor deserted sorrow.—“*The Sketch-Book.*”

## LEIGH HUNT. 1784—1859.

Sitting last winter among my books, and walled round with all the comfort and protection which they and my fire-side could afford me,—to wit, a table of high-piled books at my back, my writing-desk on one side of me, some shelves on the other, and the feeling of the warm fire at my feet,—I began to consider how I loved the authors of those books; how I loved them too, not only for the imaginative pleasures they afforded me, but for their making me love the very books themselves, and delight to be in contact with them. I looked sideways at my Spenser, my Theocritus, and my Arabian Nights; then above them at my Italian Poets; then behind me at my Dryden and Pope, my Romances, and my Boccaccio;

then on my left side at my Chaucer, who lay on my writing-desk; and thought how natural it was in Charles Lamb to give a kiss to an old folio, as I once saw him do to Chapman's Homer. . . .

I entrench myself in my books, equally against sorrow and the weather. If the wind comes through a passage, I look about to see how I can fence it off by a better disposition of my moveables; if a melancholy thought is importunate, I give another glance at my Spenser. When I speak of being in contact with my books, I mean it literally. I like to be able to lean my head against them. . . .

I like a great library next my study; but for the study itself, give me a small snug place almost entirely walled with books. There should be only one window in it, looking upon trees. Some prefer a place with few or no books at all; nothing but a chair or a table, like Epictetus: but I should say that these were philosophers, not lovers of books, if I did not recollect that Montaigne was both. He had a study in a round tower, walled as aforesaid. It is true, one forgets one's books while writing: at least they say so. For my part, I think I have them in a sort of sidelong mind's eye; like a second thought, which is none; like a waterfall, or a whispering wind. . . .

The very perusal of the backs is a "discipline of humanity." There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old Radical

friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewell: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted. Even the "high fantastical" Duchess of Newcastle, with her laurel on her head, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to trouble herself with the constitutions of her maids. . . .

How pleasant it is to reflect that the greatest lovers of books have themselves become books! What better metamorphosis could Pythagoras have desired! How Ovid and Horace exulted in anticipating theirs! And how the world have justified their exultation! They had a right to triumph over brass and marble. It is the only visible change which changes no further; which generates, and yet is not destroyed. Consider: mines themselves are exhausted; cities perish; kingdoms are swept away, and man weeps with indignation to think that his own body is not immortal. . . .

Yet this little body of thought that lies before me in the shape of a book has existed thousands of years; nor since the invention of the press, can any thing short of an universal convulsion of nature, abolish it. To a shape like this, so small, yet so comprehensive, so slight, yet so lasting, so insignificant, yet so venerable, turns the mighty activity of Homer, and so turning, is enabled to live and warm us for ever. To a

shape like this turns the placid sage of Academus: to a shape like this the grandeur of Milton, the exuberance of Spenser, the pungent elegance of Pope, and the volatility of Prior. In one small room, like the compressed spirits of Milton, can be gathered together

“The assembled souls of all that men  
held wise.”

May I hope to become the meanest of these existences? This is a question which every author, who is a lover of books, asks himself some time in his life; and which must be pardoned, because it cannot be helped. I know not. I cannot exclaim with the poet,

“Oh that my name were numbered among  
theirs,  
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.”

For my mortal days, few and feeble as the rest of them may be, are of consequence to others. But I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself, I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing as I do what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind, when he is no more. At all events, nothing, while I live and think, can deprive me of my value for such treasures. I can



help the appreciation of them while I last, and love them till I die; and perhaps, if fortune turns her face once more in kindness upon me before I go, I may chance, some quiet day, to lay my over-beating temples on a book, and so have the death I most envy.—“*The Literary Examiner: My Books*,” 1823.

[The following passages are from the Preface and Introduction to “*A Book for a Corner; or Selections in Prose and Verse from Authors the best suited to that mode of enjoyment: with Comments on each, and a General Introduction*,” 2 vols., 1849.]

The book, for the most part, is a collection of passages from such authors as retain, if not the highest, yet the most friendly and as it were domestic hold upon us during life, and sympathize with us through all portions of it. Hence the first extract is a Letter addressed to an Infant, the last the Elegy in the Churchyard, and the intermediate ones have something of an analogous reference to the successive stages of existence. It is therefore intended to be read by intelligent persons of all times of life, the youthful associations in it being such as the oldest readers love to call to mind, and the oldest such as all would gladly meet with in their decline. It has no politics in it, no polemics, nothing to offend the delicatest mind. The innocentest boy and the most cautious of his seniors might alike be glad to look over the

other's shoulder, and find him in his corner perusing it. This may be speaking in a boastful manner; but an Editor has a right to boast of his originals, especially when they are such as have comforted and delighted him throughout his own life, and are for that reason recommended by him to others.—“Preface.”

This compilation is intended for all lovers of books, at every time of life, from childhood to old age, particularly such as are fond of the authors it quotes, and who enjoy their perusal most in the quietest places. It is intended for the boy or girl who loves to get with a book into a corner—for the youth who on entering life finds his advantage in having become acquainted with books—for the man in the thick of life, to whose spare moments books are refreshments—and for persons in the decline of life, who reflect on what they have experienced, and to whom books and gardens afford their tranquildest pleasures. It is a book (not to say it immodestly) intended to lie in old parlour windows, in studies, in cottages, in cabins aboard ship, in country-inns, in country-houses, in summer-houses, in any houses that have wit enough to like it, and are not the mere victims of a table covered with books for show. . . .

Some of the most stirring men in the world, persons in the thick of business of all kinds, and indeed with the business of the world itself on their hands,—Lorenzo

de Medici, for instance, who was at once the great merchant and the political arbiter of his time,—have combined with their other energies the greatest love of books, and found no recreation at once so wholesome and so useful. We hope many a man of business will refresh himself with the short pieces in these volumes, and return to his work the fitter to baffle craft, and yet retain a reverence for simplicity. Every man who has a right sense of business, whether his business be that of the world or of himself, has a respect for all right things apart from it; because business with him is not a mindless and merely instinctive industry, like that of a beetle rolling its ball of clay, but an exercise of faculties congenial with the other powers of the human being, and all working to some social end. Hence he approves of judicious and refreshing leisure—of domestic and social evenings—of suburban retreats—of gardens—of ultimate retirement “for good”—of a reading and reflective old age. Such retirements have been longed for, and in many instances realized, by wise and great men of all classes, from the Diocletians of old to the Foxes and Burkes of our own days. Warren Hastings, who had ruled India, yearned for the scenes of his boyhood; and lived to be happy in them. The wish to possess a country-house, a retreat, a nest, a harbour of some kind from the storms and even from the agitating pleasures of life, is as old as the sorrows and

joys of civilization. The child feels it when he "plays at house;" the schoolboy, when he is reading in his corner; the lover, when he thinks of his mistress. Epicurus felt it in his garden; Horace and Virgil expressed their desire of it in passages which the sympathy of mankind has rendered immortal. It was the end of all the wisdom and experience of Shakspeare. He retired to his native town, and built himself a house in which he died. And who else does not occasionally "flit" somewhere meantime if he can? The country for many miles round London, and indeed in most other places, is adorned with houses and grounds of men of business, who are whirled to and fro on weekly or daily evenings, and who would all find something to approve in the closing chapters of our work. . . .

It is Books that teach us to refine on our pleasures when young, and which, having so taught us, enable us to recall them with satisfaction when old. For let the half-witted say what they will of delusions, no thorough reader ever ceased to believe in his books, whatever doubts they might have taught him by the way. They are pleasures too palpable and habitual for him to deny. The habit itself is a pleasure. They contain his young dreams and his old discoveries; all that he has lost, as well as all that he has gained; and, as he is no surer of the gain than of the loss, except in proportion to the strength of his perceptions, the dreams, in being renewed,

become truths again. He is again in communion with the past; again interested in its adventures, grieving with its griefs, laughing with its merriment, forgetting the very chair and room he is sitting in. Who, in the mysterious operation of things, shall dare to assert in what unreal corner of time and space that man's mind is; or what better proof he has of the existence of the poor goods and chattels about him, which at that moment (to him) are non-existent? "Oh!" people say, "but he wakes up, and sees them there." Well; he woke *down* then, and saw the rest. What we distinguish into dreams and realities, are, in both cases, but representatives of impressions. Who shall know what difference there is in them at all, save that of degree, till some higher state of existence help us to a criterion?

For our part, such real things to us are books, that, if habit and perception make the difference between real and unreal, we may say that we more frequently wake out of common life to *them*, than out of them to common life. Yet we do not find the life the less real. We only feel books to be a constituent part of it; a world, as the poet says,

"Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh  
and blood,  
Our pastime and our happiness may grow."

. . . And yet, when readers wake up to that other dream of life, called real life (and

we do not mean to deny its palpability), they do not find their enjoyment of it diminished. It is increased—increased by the contrast—by the variety—by the call upon them to show the faith which books have originally given them in all true and good things, and which books, in spite of contradiction and disappointment, have constantly maintained. Mankind are the creatures of books, as well as of other circumstances; and such they eternally remain; proofs, that the race is a noble and believing race, and capable of whatever books can stimulate.

The volumes now offered to our fellow readers originated in this kind of passion for books. They were suggested by a wish we had long felt to get up a book for our private enjoyment, and of a very particular and unambitious nature. It was to have consisted of favourite passages, not out of the authors we most admired, but those whom we most loved; and it was to have commenced, as the volumes do, with Shenstone's "Schoolmistress," and ended with Gray's "Elegy." It was to have contained indeed little which the volumes do not comprise, though not intended to be half so big, and it was to have proceeded on the same plan of beginning with childhood and ending with the church-yard. We did not intend to omit the greatest authors on account of their being the greatest, but because they moved the feelings too strongly. What we desired was not an excitement,

but a balm. Readers, who have led stirring lives, have such men as Shakspeare with them always, in their very struggles and sufferings, and in the tragic spectacles of the world. Great crowds and great passions are Shakspeares; and we, for one (and such we take to be the case with many readers), are sometimes as willing to retire from their "infinite agitation of wit," as from strifes less exalted; and retreat into the placider corners of genius more humble. It is out of no disrespect to their greatness; neither, we may be allowed to say, is it from any fear of being unable to sustain it; for we have seen perhaps as many appalling faces of things in our time as they have, and we are always ready to confront more if duty demand it. But we do not choose to be always suffering over again in books what we have suffered in the world. We prefer, when in a state of repose, to renew what we have enjoyed—to possess wholly what we enjoy still—to discern in the least and gentlest things the greatest and sweetest intentions of Nature—and to cultivate those soothing, serene, and affectionate feelings, which leave us in peace with all the world, and in good hope of the world to come. The very greatest genius, after all, is not the greatest thing in the world, any more than the greatest city in the world is the country or the sky. It is a concentration of some of its greatest powers, but it is not the greatest diffusion of its might. It is not the habit of its success, the stability of

its sereneness. And this is what readers like ourselves desire to feel and know. The greatest use of genius is but to subserve to that end; to further the means of enjoying it, and to freshen and keep it pure; as the winds and thunders, which come rarely, are purifiers of the sweet fields, which are abiding. . . .

We have imagined a book-loving man, or man able to refresh himself with books, at every successive period of his life;—the child at his primer, the sanguine boy, the youth entering the world, the man in the thick of it, the man of alternate business and repose, the retired man calmly considering his birth and his death; and in this one human being we include, of course, the whole race and both sexes, mothers, wives, and daughters, and all which they do to animate and sweeten existence. Thus our invisible, or rather many-bodied hero (who is the reader himself), is in the first instance a baby; then a child under the "School-mistress" of Shenstone; then the school-boy with Gray and Walpole, reading poetry and romance; then "Gil Blas" entering the world; then the sympathiser with the "John Buncles" who enjoy it, and the "Travellers" who fill it with enterprise; then the matured man beginning to talk of disappointments, and standing in need of admonition "Against Inconsistency in his Expectations" [the title of an admirable Essay by Mrs. Barbauld]; then the reassured man comforted by his honesty and

.



his just hopes, and refreshing himself with his *Club* or his country-lodging, his pictures, or his theatre ; then the retiring, or retired, or finally old man, looking back with tenderness on his enjoyments, with regret for his errors, with comfort in his virtues, and with a charity for all men, which gives him a right to the comfort ; loving all the good things he ever loved, particularly the books which have been his companions and the childhood which he meets again in the fields ; and neither wishing nor fearing to be gathered into that kindly bosom of Nature, which covers the fields with flowers, and is encircled with the heavens. . . .

A universalist, in one high bibliographical respect, may be said to be the only true reader ; for he is the only reader on whom no writing is lost. Too many people approve no books but such as are representatives of some opinion or passion of their own. They read, not to have human nature reflected on them, and so be taught to know and to love everything, but to be reflected themselves as in a pocket mirror, and so interchange admiring looks with their own narrow cast of countenance. The universalist alone puts up with difference of opinion, by reason of his own very difference ; because his difference is a right claimed by him in the spirit of universal allowance, and not a privilege arrogated by conceit. He loves poetry and prose, fiction and matter of fact, seriousness and mirth, because he is a thorough human being, and contains

portions of all the faculties to which they appeal. A man who can be nothing but serious, or nothing but merry, is but half a man. The lachrymal or the risible organs are wanting in him. He has no business to have eyes or muscles like other men. The universalist alone can put up with *him*, by reason of the very sympathy of his antipathy. He understands the defect enough to pity, while he dislikes it. The universalist is the only reader who can make something out of books for which he has no predilection. He sees differences in them to sharpen his reasoning; sciences which impress on him a sense of his ignorance; nay, languages which, if they can do nothing else, amuse his eye and set him thinking of other countries. . . .

Our compilation, therefore, though desirous to please all who are willing to be pleased, is ambitious to satisfy this sort of person most of all. It is of *his* childhood we were mostly thinking when we extracted the "Schoolmistress." *He* will thoroughly understand the wisdom lurking beneath the playfulness of its author. *He* will know how wholesome as well as amusing it is to become acquainted with books like "Gil Blas" and "Joseph Andrews." *He* will derive agreeable terror from "Sir Bertram" and the "Haunted Chamber;" will assent with delighted reason to every sentence in "Mrs. Barbauld's Essay;" will feel himself wandering into solitudes with "Gray;" shake honest hands with "Sir Roger de

Coverley;" be ready to embrace "Parson Adams," and to chuck "Pounce" out of window, instead of the hat; will travel with "Marco Polo" and "Mungo Park;" stay at home with "Thomson;" retire with "Cowley;" be industrious with "Hutton;" sympathizing with "Gay and Mrs. Inchbald;" laughing with (and at) "Buncle;" melancholy, and forlorn, and self-restored, with the shipwrecked mariner of "De Foe." There are "Robinson Crusoes" in the moral as well as physical world, and even a universalist may be one of them;—men, cast on desert islands of thought and speculation; without companionship; without worldly resources; forced to arm and clothe themselves out of the remains of shipwrecked hopes, and to make a home for their solitary hearts in the nooks and corners of imagination and reading. It is not the worst lot in the world. Turned to account for others, and embraced with patient cheerfulness, it may, with few exceptions, even be one of the best. We hope our volume may light into the hands of such men. Every extract which is made in it, has something of a like second-purpose, beyond what appears on its face. There is amusement for those who require nothing more, and instruction in the shape of amusement for those who choose to find it. . . .

Our book may have little novelty in the least sense of the word; but it has the best in the greatest sense; that is to say,

*never-dying novelty*;—antiquity hung with ivy-blossoms and rose-buds; old friends with the ever-new faces of wit, thought, and affection. Time has proved the genius with which it is filled. “Age cannot wither it,” nor “custom stale its variety.” We ourselves have read, and shall continue to read it to our dying day; and we should not say thus much, especially on such an occasion, if we did not know, that hundreds and thousands would do the same, whether they read it in this collection or not.—Introduction to “A Book for a Corner.”

*On Booksellers' Catalogues.*—A Catalogue is not a mere catalogue or list of saleables as the uninitiated may fancy. Even a common auctioneer's catalogue of goods and chattels, suggests a thousand reflections to a peruser of any knowledge; judge then what the case must be with a catalogue of Books; the very titles of which run the rounds of the whole world, visible and invisible; geographies—biographies—histories—loves—hates—joys—sorrows—cookeries—sciences—fashion,—and eternity! We speak on this subject from the most literal experience; for often and often have we cut open a new catalogue of old books, with all the fervour and ivory folder of a first love; often read one at tea; nay, at dinner: and have put crosses against dozens of volumes in the list, out of the pure imagination of buying them, the possibility being out of *the question!*”

[The reader is referred to the Appendix for an array of opinions of some of the most distinguished Book-Lovers and Book-Writers regarding Leigh Hunt, his genius and works. This author takes a high rank among our best Essayists, and his criticisms, on English poetry especially, are remarkable for their geniality and refined appreciation. He was the finest *belles-lettrist* of his day, and a typical Man of Letters. Mr. Carlyle's beautiful greeting to Leigh Hunt on the appearance of his "Autobiography" (given in the Appendix), is, perhaps, the most cordial and touching letter to be found in the annals of Literary Correspondence.]

THOMAS DE QUINCEY. 1786—1859.

A great scholar, in the highest sense of the term, is not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the Angel of the Resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life.

And of this let every one be assured—that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read, many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace

back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mould him through life like the forgotten incidents of childhood.

Books teach by one machinery, conversation by another; and if these resources were trained into correspondence to their own separate ideals, they might become reciprocally the complements of each other.

At this hour, five hundred years since their creation, the tales of Chaucer, never equalled on this earth for their tenderness, and for life of picturesqueness, are read familiarly by many in the charming language of their natal day, and by others in the modernisations of Dryden, of Pope, and Wordsworth. At this hour, one thousand eight hundred years since their creation, the Pagan tales of Ovid, never equalled on this earth for the gaiety of their movement and the capricious graces of their narrative, are read by all Christendom. This man's people and their monuments are dust; but *he* is alive: he has survived them, as he told us that he had it in his commission to do, by a thousand years; "and *shall* a thousand more."—"Essay on Pope."

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (BARRY  
CORNWALL). 1787—1874.

All round the room my silent servants  
wait,—

My friends in every season, bright and dim  
Angels and seraphim

Come down and murmur to me, sweet and  
low,  
And spirits of the skies all come and go  
Early and late ;  
From the old world's divine and distant  
date,  
From the sublimer few,  
Down to the poet who but yester-eve  
Sang sweet and made us grieve,  
All come, assembling here in order due.  
And here I dwell with Poesy, my mate,  
With Erato and all her vernal sighs,  
Great Clio with her victories elate,  
Or pale Urania's deep and starry eyes.  
Oh friends, whom chance and change can  
never harm  
Whom Death the tyrant cannot doom to die  
Within whose folding soft eternal charm  
I love to lie,  
And meditate upon your verse that flows,  
And fertilizes wheresoe'er it goes,  
Whether . . . .

"Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall): An Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Personal Sketches of Contemporaries, Unpublished Lyrics, and Letters of Literary Friends," 1877.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER.

b. 1788—d. 1860.

It is the case with literature as with life; wherever we turn we come upon the incorrigible mob of humankind, whose name is

Legion, swarming everywhere, damaging everything, as flies in summer. Hence the multiplicity of bad books, those exuberant weeds of literature which choke the true corn. Such books rob the public of time, money, and attention, which ought properly to belong to good literature and noble aims, and they are written with a view merely to make money or occupation. They are therefore not merely useless, but injurious. Nine-tenths of our current literature has no other end but to inveigle a thaler or two out of the public pocket, for which purpose author, publisher, and printer are leagued together. A more pernicious, subtler, and bolder piece of trickery is that by which penny-a-liners and scribblers succeed in destroying good taste and real culture. . . . Hence, the paramount importance of acquiring the art *not* to read; in other words, of not reading such books as occupy the public mind, or even those which make a noise in the world, and reach several editions in their first and last year of existence. We should recollect that he who writes for fools finds an enormous audience, and we should devote the ever scant leisure of our circumscribed existence to the master-spirits of all ages and nations, those who tower over humanity, and whom the voice of Fame proclaims: only such writers cultivate and instruct us. Of bad books we can never read too little: of the good never too much. The bad are intellectual poison and undermine the understanding. Because



people insist on reading not the best books written for all time, but the newest contemporary literature, writers of the day remain in the narrow circle of the same perpetually revolving ideas, and the age continues to wallow in its own mire. . . . Mere acquired knowledge belongs to us only like a wooden leg and a wax nose. Knowledge attained by means of thinking resembles our natural limbs, and is the only kind that really belongs to us. Hence the difference between the thinker and the pedant. The intellectual possession of the independent thinker is like a beautiful picture which stands before us, a living thing with fitting light and shadow, sustained tones, perfect harmony of colour. That of the merely learned man may be compared to a palette covered with bright colours, perhaps even arranged with some system, but wanting in harmony, coherence and meaning. . . . Only those writers profit us whose understanding is quicker, more lucid than our own, by whose brain we indeed think for a time; who quicken our thoughts, and lead us whither alone we could not find our way. —[An account of the Life and Philosophy of this remarkable pessimist thinker was published by Miss Helen Zimmern in 1876.]

LOVE PEACOCK. *b.* 1785—*d.* 1866.

[Dr. Folliott *loquitur*] There is nothing more fit to be looked at than the outside of a book. It is, as I may say from repeated ex-

perience, a pure and unmixed pleasure to have a goodly volume lying before you, and to know that you may open it if you please, and need not open it unless you please. It is a resource against *ennui*, if *ennui* should come upon you. To have the resource and not to feel the *ennui*, to enjoy your bottle in the present, and your book in the indefinite future, is a delightful condition of human existence.—“Crotchet Castle,” Chap. vii., The Sleeping Venus.

DR. ARNOTT. 1788—1874.

In remote times the inhabitants of the earth were divided into small states or societies, often at enmity among themselves, and whose thoughts and interests were confined much within their own narrow territories and rude habits. In succeeding ages men found themselves belonging to larger communities, as when the English heptarchy became united, or more lately when England, Scotland, and Ireland have become one; but still distant kingdoms and quarters of the world were of no interest to them, and often were totally unknown. Now, however, a man feels that he is a member of one vast more civilized society which covers the face of the earth, and no part of the earth is indifferent to him. In England, for instance, a man of small fortune, nay, even a journeyman mechanic who is honest, sober, and intelligent, may cast his regards around him, and say, with

truth and exultation, "I am lodged in a house that affords me conveniences and comforts which some centuries ago even a king could not command. Ships are crossing the seas in every direction to bring what is useful to me from all parts of the earth; in China men are gathering the tea leaf for me, in the West India Islands and elsewhere they are preparing my sugar and my coffee; in America they are cultivating cotton for me; elsewhere they are [shearing the sheep to give me abundance of warm clothing; at home powerful steam-engines are spinning and weaving for me and making cutlery, and pumping the mines that minerals useful to me may be procured. My patrimony was small, yet I have railway-trains running day and night on all the roads to carry my correspondence and to bring the coal for my winter fire; nay, I have protecting fleets and armies around my happy country, to render secure my enjoyments and repose. Then I have editors and printers, who daily send me an account of what is going on throughout the world, among these people who serve me. And in a corner of my house I have books—the miracle of all my possessions, more wonderful than the wishing-cap of the Arabian tales, for they transport me instantly, not only to all places, but to all times. By my books I can conjure up before me to a momentary existence many of the great and good men of past ages, and for my individual satisfaction they seem to act again the most renowned of their achieve-

ments; the orators declaim for me, the historians recite, the poets sing." This picture is not overcharged, and might be much extended; such being the goodness and providence which devised this world, that each individual of the civilized millions that cover it, if his conduct be prudent, may have nearly the same happiness as if he were the single lord of all.—"The Elements of Physics."

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL. 1792—1871.

There is a want too much lost sight of in our estimate of the privations of the humbler classes, though it is one of the most incessantly craving of all our wants, and is actually the impelling power which, in the vast majority of cases, urges men into vice and crime. It is the want of amusement. It is in vain to declaim against it.—Equally with any other principle of our nature, it calls for its natural indulgence, and cannot be permanently debarred from it, without souring the temper, and spoiling the character. Like the indulgence of all other appetites, it only requires to be kept within due bounds, and turned upon innocent or beneficial objects, to become a spring of happiness; but gratified to a certain moderate extent it must be, in the case of every man, if we desire him to be either a useful, active, or contented member of society. Now I would ask, what provision do we find for the cheap and innocent and

daily amusements of the mass of the labouring population of this country? What sort of resources have they to call up the cheerfulness of their spirits, and chase away the cloud from their brow after the fatigue of a day's hard work, or the stupefying monotony of some sedentary occupation? Why, really very little—I hardly like to assume the appearance of a wish to rip up grievances by saying *how* little. The pleasant field walk and the village green are becoming rarer and rarer every year. Music and dancing (the more's the pity) have become so closely associated with ideas of riot and debauchery among the less cultivated classes, that a taste for them for their own sakes can hardly be said to exist, and before they can be recommended as innocent or safe amusements, a very great change of ideas must take place. The beer-shop and the public-house, it is true, are always open, and always full, but it is not by *those* institutions that the cause of moral and intellectual culture is advanced. The truth is, that under the pressure of a continually condensing population, the habits of the city have crept into the village—the demands of agriculture have become sterner and more imperious, and while hardly a foot of ground is left uncultivated, and unappropriated, there is positively not space left for many of the cheerful amusements of rural life. Now, since this appears to be unavoidable, and as it is physically impossible that the amusements of a condensed population

should continue to be those of a scattered one, it behoves us strongly to consider of some substitutes. But perhaps it may appear to some almost preposterous to enter on the question. Why, the very name of a labourer has something about it with which amusement seems out of character. Labour is work, amusement is play—and though it has passed into a proverb, that one without the other will make a dull boy, we seem to have altogether lost sight of a thing equally obvious—that a community of "dull boys" in this sense, is only another word for a society of ignorant, headlong, and ferocious men.

I hold it, therefore, to be a matter of very great consequence, independent of the kindness of the thing—that those who are at their ease in this world, should look about and be at some pains to furnish available means of harmless gratification to the industrious and well-disposed classes, who are worse provided for than themselves in every respect, but who, on that very account, are prepared to prize more highly every accession of true enjoyment, and who really want it more. To do so is to hold out a bonus for the withdrawal of a man from mischief in his idle hours—it is to break that strong tie which binds many a one to evil associates and brutal habits—the want of something better to amuse him,—by actually making his abstinence become its own reward.

Now, of all the amusements which can

possibly be imagined for a hard-working man, after his daily toil, or in its intervals, there is nothing like reading an entertaining book, supposing him to have a taste for it, and supposing him to have the book to read. It calls for no bodily exertion, of which he has had enough or too much. It relieves his home of its dullness and sameness, which, in nine cases out of ten, is what drives him out to the ale-house, to his own ruin and his family's. It transports him into a livelier, and gayer, and more diversified and interesting scene, and while he enjoys himself there he may forget the evils of the present moment, fully as much as if he were ever so drunk, with the great advantage of finding himself the next day with his money in his pocket, or at least laid out in real necessities and comforts for himself and his family,—and without a headache. Nay, it accompanies him to his next day's work, and if the book he has been reading be anything above the very idlest and lightest, gives him something to think of besides the mere mechanical drudgery of his every day occupation,—something he can enjoy while absent, and look forward with pleasure to return to.

But supposing him to have been fortunate in the choice of his book, and to have alighted upon one really good and of a good class. What a source of domestic enjoyment is laid open! What a bond of family union! He may read it aloud, or make his wife read it, or his eldest boy or girl, or pass it round

from hand to hand. All have the benefit of it—all contribute to the gratification of the rest, and a feeling of common interest and pleasure is excited. Nothing unites people like companionship in intellectual enjoyment. It does more, it gives them mutual respect, and to each among them self-respect—that corner-stone of all virtue. . . . While thus leading him to look within his own bosom for the ultimate sources of his happiness, warns him at the same time to be cautious how he defiles and desecrates that inward and most glorious of temples.

I recollect an anecdote told me by a late highly-respected inhabitant of Windsor as a fact which he could personally testify, having occurred in a village where he resided several years, and where he actually was at the time it took place. The blacksmith of the village had got hold of Richardson's novel of "*Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*," and used to read it aloud in the long summer evenings, seated on his anvil, and never failed to have a large and attentive audience. It is a pretty long-winded book—but their patience was fully a match for the author's prolixity, and they fairly listened to it all. At length, when the happy turn of fortune arrived, which brings the hero and heroine together, and sets them living long and happily according to the most approved rules—the congregation were so delighted as to raise a great shout, and procuring the church keys, actually set the parish bells ringing. Now let any one say whether it is



easy to estimate the amount of good done in this simple case. Not to speak of the number of hours agreeably and innocently spent—not to speak of the good-fellowship and harmony promoted—here was a whole rustic population fairly won over to the side of good—charmed—and night after night spell-bound within that magic circle which genius can trace so effectually, and compelled to bow before that image of virtue and purity which, (though at a great expence of words) no one knew better how to body forth with a thousand life-like touches than the author of that work.

If I were to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. I speak of it of course only as a worldly advantage, and not in the slightest degree as superseding or derogating from the higher office and surer and stronger panoply of religious principles—but as a taste, an instrument and a mode of pleasurable gratification. Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest—with the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest

characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations—a cotemporary of all ages. The world has been created for him. It is hardly possible but the character should take a higher and better tone from the constant habit of associating in thought with a class of thinkers, to say the least of it, above the average of humanity. It is morally impossible but that the manners should take a tinge of good breeding and civilization from having constantly before one's eyes the way in which the best-bred and the best-informed men have talked and conducted themselves in their intercourse with each other. There is a gentle, but perfectly irresistible coercion in a habit of reading well directed, over the whole tenor of a man's character and conduct, which is not the less effectual because it works insensibly, and because it is really the last thing he dreams of. It cannot, in short, be better summed up, than in the words of the Latin poet—

“*Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.*”

It civilizes the conduct of men—and *suffers* them not to remain barbarous.

The reason why I have dwelt so strongly upon the point of amusement, is this—that it is really the *only* handle, at least the only innocent one, by which we can gain a fair grasp of the attention of those who have

grown up in a want of instruction, and in a carelessness of their own improvement. Those who cater for the passions, especially the base or malignant ones, find an easy access to the ignorant and idle of every rank and station—but it is not so with sound knowledge or rational instruction. The very act of sitting down to read a book is an effort, it is a kind of venture—at all events, it involves a certain expenditure of time which we think might be otherwise pleasantly employed—and if this is not instantly and in the very act repaid with positive pleasure, we may rest assured it will not be often repeated—and what is worse, every failure tends to originate and confirm a distaste. If then we would generate a taste for reading, we must, as our only chance of success, begin by pleasing. And what is more, this must be not only the ostensible, but the *real* object of the works we offer. The listlessness and want of sympathy with which most of the works written expressly for circulation among the labouring classes, are read by them, if read at all, arises mainly from this—that the story told, of the lively or friendly style assumed, is *manifestly* and *palpably* only a cloak for the instruction intended to be conveyed—a sort of gilding of what they cannot well help fancying must be a pill, when they see so much and such obvious pains taken to wrap it up.

But try it on the other tack. Furnish them liberally with books not written ex-

pressly for them as a class—but published for their betters (as the phrase is), and those the best of their kind. You will soon find that they have the same feelings to be interested by the varieties of fortune and incident—the same discernment to perceive the shades of character—the same relish for striking contrasts of good and evil in moral conduct, and the same irresistible propensity to take the good side—the same perception of the sublime and beautiful in nature and art, when distinctly placed before them by the touches of a master—and what is most of all to the present purpose, the same desire having once been pleased, to be pleased again. In short, you will find that in the higher and better class of works of fiction and imagination duly circulated, you possess all you require to strike your grappling-iron into their souls, and chain them, willing followers, to the car of advancing civilization. . . .

The novel, in its best form, I regard as one of the most powerful engines of civilization ever invented—but not the foolish romances which used to be the terror of our maiden aunts; not the insolent productions which the press has lately teemed with under the title of fashionable novels—nor the desperate attempts to novelize history which the herd of Scott's imitators have put forth, which have left no epoch since the creation untenanted by modern antiques—and no character in history unfalsified—but the novel as it has been put forth by

Cervantes and Richardson, by Goldsmith, by Edgeworth, and Scott. In the writings of these and such as these, we have a stock of works in the highest degree enticing and interesting, and of the utmost purity and morality—full of admirable lessons of conduct, and calculated in every respect to create and cherish that invaluable habit of resorting to books for pleasure. Those who have once experienced the enjoyment of such works will not easily learn to abstain from reading, and will not willingly descend to an inferior grade of intellectual privilege—they have become prepared for reading of a higher order—and may be expected to relish the finest strains of poetry, and to draw with advantage from the purest wells of history and philosophy. Nor let it be thought ridiculous or overstrained to associate the idea of poetry, history or philosophy, with the homely garb and penurious fare of the peasant. . . . There is always this advantage in aiming at the highest results—that the failure is never total, and that though the end accomplished may fall far short of that proposed, it cannot but reach far in advance of the point from which we start. There never was any great and permanent good accomplished but by hoping for and aiming at something still greater and better.

A taste for reading once created, there can be little difficulty in directing it to its proper objects. . . . But the first step necessary to be taken is to set seriously

about arousing the dormant appetite by applying the stimulant; to awaken the torpid intellectual being from its state of inaction to a sense of its existence and of its wants. The after-task, to gratify them, and while gratifying to enlarge and improve them, will prove easy in comparison.—“An Address to the Subscribers to the Windsor and Eton Public Library and Reading Room,” 29th January, 1833.

ARCHDEACON JULIUS C. HARE.

1795—1855.

For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most; and when the difficulties have once been overcome, there are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections. . . . Above all, in the present age of light reading, that is, of reading hastily, thoughtlessly, indiscriminately, unfruitfully, when most books are forgotten as soon as they are finished, and very many sooner, it is well if something heavier is cast now and then into the midst of the literary public. These may scare and repel the trash, it will rouse and attract the stronger, and increase their strength, by making them exert it. In the sweat of the brow, is the mind as well as the body to eat its bread. *Nil sine magno Musa labore dedit mortalibus.* . . . Desultory reading

is indeed very mischievous, by fostering habits of loose, discontinuous thought, by turning the memory into a common sewer for rubbish of all thoughts to flow through, and by relaxing the power of attention, which of all our faculties most needs care, and is most improved by it. But a well-regulated course of study will no more weaken the mind than hard exercise will weaken the body; nor will a strong understanding be weighed down by its knowledge, any more than oak is by its leaves, or than Samson was by his locks. He whose sinews are drained by his hair, must already be a weakling.—“*Guesses at Truth.*”

THOMAS CARLYLE. 1795—1881.

Excepting one or two individuals I have little society that I value very highly; but books are a ready and effectual resource. May blessings be upon the head of Cadmus, the Phœnicians, or whoever it was that invented books! I may not detain you with the praises of an art that carries the voice of man to the extremity of the earth and to the latest generations; but it is lawful for the solitary wight to express the love he feels for those companions so steadfast and un-presuming, that go or come without reluctance, and that, when his fellow-animals are proud or stupid or peevish, are ever ready to cheer the languor of his soul, and gild the barrenness of life with the treasures of by-gone times.—“*Letter to Robert Mitchell*”

(an intimate college-friend), Kirkcaldy, February 16th, 1818 (in his 23rd year).

Yet wherefore should we murmur? A share of evil, greater or less (the difference of shares is not worth mentioning) is the unalterable doom of mortals, and the mind may be taught to abide in peace. Complaint is generally despicable, always worse than unavailing. It is an instructive thing, I think, to observe Lord Byron, surrounded with the voluptuousness of an Italian seraglio, chanting a mournful strain over the wretchedness of human life—and then to contemplate the poor but lofty-minded Epictetus, the slave of a cruel master too; and to hear him lifting up his voice to far-distant generations in these unforgotten words. [Quotation from the “*Enchiridion*.”] But a truce to moralising; suffice it with our Stoic, to suffer and abstain.—“Letter to Thomas Murray” (another intimate friend), Kirkcaldy, 28th July, 1818.

Do not fear that I shall read you a homily on that hackneyed theme—contentment. Simply I wish to tell you that in days of darkness—for there *are* days when my support (pride, or whatever it is) has enough to do—I find it useful to remember that Cleanthes, whose memorable words may last yet other two thousand years, never murmured when he laboured by night, as a street-porter, that he might hear the lectures of Zeno by day; and that Epictetus, the ill-

.



used slave of a cruel tyrant's as wretched minion, wrote that "Enchiridion" which may fortify the soul of the latest inhabitant of the earth.—"Letter to Robert Mitchell," Kirkcaldy, 6th November, 1818.

I thank Heaven I have still a boundless appetite for reading. I have thoughts of lying buried alive here for many years, forgetting all stuff about "reputation," success, and so forth, and resolutely setting myself to gain insight by the only method not shut out from me—that of books. Two articles (of fifty pages) in the year will keep me living; employment in that kind is open enough. For the rest, I really find almost that I do *best* when *forgotten* by men, and nothing above or around me but the imperishable Heaven. It never wholly seems to me that I am to die in this wilderness; a feeling is always dimly with me that I am to be called out of it, and have work fit for me before I depart, the rather as I can do *either way*. Let not solitude, let not silence and unparticipating isolation make a savage of thee—these, too, have their advantages.—"Journal, Craigenputtock, September 3rd, 1832." (See Froude's "Life of Carlyle," vol. ii., p. 309.)

[Thomas à Kempis, "De Imitatione Christi."] None, I believe, except the Bible, has been so universally read and loved by Christians of all tongues and sects. It gives me pleasure to think that

the Christian heart of our good mother may also derive nourishment and strength from what has already nourished and strengthened so many. [He had sent his mother a copy of the book in February, 1833.]—Froude's "Life of Carlyle," vol. ii., p. 337.

"Visible and tangible products of the past, again, I reckon up to the extent of three: Cities, with their cabinets and arsenals; their tilled Fields, to either or to both of which divisions roads with their bridges may belong; and thirdly — Books. In which third, truly, the last invented, lies a worth far surpassing that of the two others. Wondrous indeed is the virtue of a true book! Not like a dead city of stones, yearly crumbling, yearly needing repair; more like a tilled field, but then a spiritual field; like a spiritual tree, let me rather say, it stands from year to year, and from age to age (we have books that already number some hundred and fifty human ages); and yearly comes its new produce of leaves (commentaries, deductions, philosophical, political systems; or were it only sermons, pamphlets, journalistic essays), every one of which is talismanic and thaumaturgic, for it can persuade men. O thou who art able to write a book, which once in the two centuries or oftener there is a man gifted to do, envy not him whom they name city-builder, and inexpressibly pity him whom they name conqueror or city-burner! Thou, too, art a

conqueror and victor; but of the true sort, namely, over the Devil. Thou, too, hast built what will outlast all marble and metal, and be a wonder-bringing city of the mind, a temple and seminary and prophetic mount, whereto all kindreds of the earth will pilgrim."—"Sartor Resartus," 1838.

Our pious Fathers, feeling well what importance lay in the speaking of man to men, founded churches, made endowments, regulations; everywhere in the civilised world there is a Pulpit, environed with all manner of complex dignified appurtenances and furtherances, that therefrom a man with the tongue may, to best advantage, address his fellow-men. They felt that this was the most important thing; that without this there was no good thing. It is a right pious work, that of theirs; beautiful to behold! But now with the art of Writing, with the art of Printing, a total change has come over that business. The Writer of a Book, is not he a Preacher preaching not to this parish or that, on this day or that, but to all men in all times and places? . . .

Certainly the Art of Writing is the most miraculous of all things man has devised. Odin's *Runes* were the first form of the work of a Hero; *Books*, written words, are still miraculous *Runes*, the latest form! In Books lies the *soul* of the whole Past Time; the articulate audible voice of the Past, when the body and material substance of it has altogether vanished like a dream. Mighty

fleets and armies, harbours and arsenals, vast cities, high-domed, many-engined,—they are precious, great: but what do they become? Agamemnon, the many Agamemnons, Pericleses, and their Greece; all is gone now to some ruined fragments, dumb mournful wrecks and blocks: but the Books of Greece! There Greece, to every thinker, still very literally lives; can be called-up again into life. No magic *Rune* is stranger than a Book. All that Mankind has done, thought, gained or been: it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

Do not Books still accomplish *miracles* as *Runes* were fabled to do? They persuade men. Not the wretchedest circulating-library novel, which foolish girls thumb and con in remote villages, but will help to regulate the actual practical weddings and households of those foolish girls. So “Celia” felt, so “Clifford” acted: the foolish Theorem of Life, stamped into those young brains, comes out as a solid Practice one day. Consider whether any *Rune* in the wildest imagination of Mythologist ever did such wonders as, on the actual firm Earth, some Books have done! What built St. Paul’s Cathedral? Look at the heart of the matter, it was that divine Hebrew Book,—the word partly of the man Moses, an outlaw tending his Midianitish herds, four thousand years ago, in the wildernesses of Sinai! It is the strangest of things, yet nothing is truer. With the

art of Writing, of which Printing is a simple, an inevitable and comparatively insignificant corollary, the true reign of miracles for mankind commenced. It related, with a wondrous new contiguity and perpetual closeness, the Past and Distant with the Present in time and place ; all times and all places with this our actual Here and Now. All things were altered for men ; all modes of important work of men : teaching, preaching, governing and all else. . . .

Once invent Printing, you metamorphosed all Universities, or superseded them ! The Teacher needed not now to gather men personally round him, that he might *speak* to them what he knew ; print it in a Book, and all learners, far and wide, for a trifle, had it each at his own fireside, much more effectually to learn it ! . . . If we think of it, all that a University, or final highest School can do for us, is still but what the first School began doing,—teach us to *read*. We learn to *read*, in various languages, in various sciences ; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manner of Books. But the place where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves ! It depends on what we read, after all manner of Professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books. . . .

Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and

melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here, as everywhere.

I many a time say, the writers of Newspapers, Pamphlets, Poems, Books, these *are* the real working effective Church of a modern country. Nay not only our preaching, but even our worship, is not it too accomplished by means of Printed Books? The noble sentiment which a gifted soul has clothed for us in melodious words, which brings melody into our hearts, —is not this essentially, if we will understand it, of the nature of worship? There are many, in all countries, who, in this confused time, have no other method of worship. He who, in any way, shows us better than we knew before that a lily of the fields is beautiful, does he not show it us as an effluence of the Fountain of all Beauty; as the *handwriting*, made visible there, of the great Maker of the Universe? He has sung for us, made us sing with him a little verse of a sacred Psalm. Essentially so. How much more he who sings, who says, or in any way brings home to our heart the noble doings, feelings, darings and endurances of a brother man! He has verily touched our hearts as with a live coal *from the altar*. Perhaps there is no worship more authentic. . . .

On all sides, are we not driven to the conclusion that, of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most

momentous, wonderful and worthy are the things we call Books! Those poor bits of rag-paper with black ink on them;—from the Daily Newspaper to the sacred Hebrew Book, what have they not done, what are they not doing!—For indeed, whatever be the outward form of the thing (bits of paper, as we say, and black ink), is it not verily, at bottom, the highest act of man's faculty that produces a Book? It is the *Thought* of man; the true thaumaturgic virtue; by which man works all things whatsoever. All that he does, and brings to pass, is the vesture of a Thought. This London City, with all its houses, palaces, steam engines, cathedrals, and huge immeasurable traffic and tumult, what is it but a Thought, but millions of Thoughts made into One;—a huge immeasurable Spirit of a THOUGHT, embodied in brick, in iron, smoke, dust, Palaces, Parliaments, Hackney Coaches, Katherine Docks, and the rest of it! Not a brick was made but some man had to *think* of the making of that brick.—The thing we called “bits of paper with traces of black ink,” is the *purest* embodiment a Thought of man can have. No wonder it is, in all ways, the activist and noblest.—“Lectures on Heroes: The Hero as Man of Letters,” 1840.

Possibly too you may have heard it said that the course of centuries has changed all this; and that “the true University of our days is a Collection of Books.” And beyond doubt, all this is greatly altered by the

invention of Printing, which took place about midway between us and the origin of Universities. Men have not now to go in person to where a Professor is actually speaking; because in most cases you can get his doctrine out of him through a book; and can then read it, and read it again and again, and study it. That is an immense change, that one fact of Printed Books. And I am not sure that I know of any University in which the whole of that fact has yet been completely taken in, and the studies moulded in complete conformity with it. . . .

It remains, however, practically a most important truth, what I alluded to above, that the main use of Universities in the present age is that, after you have done with all your classes, the next thing is a collection of books, a great library of good books, which you proceed to study and to read. What the Universities can mainly do for you,—what I have found the University did for me, is, That it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences; so that I could go into the books which treated of these things, and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me.

Whatever you may think of these historical points, the clearest and most imperative duty lies on every one of you to be assiduous in your reading. Learn to be good readers,—which is perhaps a more difficult thing than you imagine. Learn to be discriminative



in your reading; to read faithfully, and with your best attention, all kinds of things which you have a real interest in, a real not an imaginary, and which you find to be really fit for what you are engaged in. . . . The most unhappy of all men is the man who cannot tell what he is going to do, who has got no work cut-out for him in the world, and does not go into it. For work is the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind,—honest work, which you intend getting done. . . .

I do not know whether it has been sufficiently brought home to you that there are two kinds of books. When a man is reading on any kind of subject, in most departments of books,—in all books, if you take it in a wide sense,—he will find that there is a division into good books and bad books. Everywhere a good kind of book and a bad kind of book. I am not to assume that you are unacquainted, or ill-acquainted with this plain fact; but I may remind you that it is becoming a very important consideration in our day. And we have to cast aside altogether the idea people have, that if they are reading any book, that if an ignorant man is reading any book, he is doing rather better than nothing at all. I must entirely call that in question; I even venture to deny that. It would be much safer and better for many a reader, that he had no concern with books at all. There is a number, a frightfully increasing number, of books that are decidedly, to the readers

of them, not useful. But an ingenious reader will learn, also, that a certain number of books were written by a supremely noble kind of people,—not a very great number of books, but still a number fit to occupy all your reading industry, do adhere more or less to that side of things. In short, as I have written it down somewhere else, I conceive that books are like men's souls; divided into sheep and goats. Some few are going up, and carrying us up, heavenward; calculated, I mean, to be of priceless advantage in teaching,—in forwarding the teaching of all generations. Others, a frightful multitude, are going down, down; doing ever the more and the wider and the wilder mischief. Keep a strict eye on that latter class of books, my young friends!—And for the rest, in regard to all your studies and readings here, and to whatever you may learn, you are to remember that the object is not particular knowledges,—not that of getting higher and higher in technical perfections, and all that sort of thing. There is a higher aim lying at the rear of all that, especially among those who are intended for literary or speaking pursuits, or the sacred profession. You are ever to bear in mind that there lies behind that the acquisition of what may be called wisdom;—namely, sound appreciation and just decision as to all the objects that come round you, and the habit of behaving with justice, candour, clear insight, and loyal adherence to fact. Great is wisdom; infinite

is the value of wisdom. It cannot be exaggerated; it is the highest achievement of man: "Blessed is he that getteth understanding." And that, I believe, on occasion, may be missed very easily; never more easily than now, I sometimes think. If that is a failure, all is failure!—However, I will not touch further upon that matter.—  
"Miscellanies: Inaugural Address at Edinburgh, 2nd April, 1866, on being installed as Rector of the University there."

BISHOP THIRLWALL. 1797—1875.

I flatter myself that I can sympathise with your enjoyment of a quiet day. A life of constant society would to me be perfectly intolerable, while I was never yet tired by what is called solitude (being indeed some of the choicest society to one who likes a book).—"Letters to a Friend."

A. BRONSON ALCOTT (AMERICAN  
ESSAYIST). *b.* 1799 [Living].

Good books, like good friends, are few and chosen; the more select the more enjoyable; and like these are approached with diffidence, nor sought too familiarly nor too often, having the precedence only when friends tire. The most mannerly of companions, accessible at all times, in all moods, they frankly declare the author's mind, without giving offence. Like living friends they too have their voice and phy-

siognomies, and their company is prized as old acquaintances. We seek them in our need of counsel or of amusement, without impertinence or apology, sure of having our claims allowed. A good book justifies our theory of personal supremacy, keeping this fresh in the memory and perennial. What were days without such fellowship? We were alone in the world without it. Nor does our faith falter though the secret we search for and do not find in them will not commit itself to literature, still we take up the new issue with the old expectation, and again and again, as we try our friends after many failures at conversation, believing this visit will be the favored hour and all will be told us. Nor do I know what book I can well spare, certainly none that has admitted me, though it be but for the moment and by the most oblique glimpse, into the mind and personality of its author; though few there are that prefer such friendly claim to one's regard, and satisfy expectation as he turns their leaves. Our favorites are few; since only what rises from the heart reaches it, being caught and carried on the tongues of men wheresoever love and letters journey.

Nor need we wonder at their scarcity or the value we set upon them; life, the essence of good letters as of friendship, being its own best biographer, the artist that portrays the persons and thoughts we are, and are becoming. And the most that even he can do, is but a chance stroke or two

at this fine essence housed in the handsome dust, but too fugitive and coy to be caught and held fast for longer than the passing glance; the master touching ever and retouching the picture he leaves unfinished.

"My life has been the poem I would have writ,  
But I could not both live and utter it."

. . . Any library is an attraction. And there is an indescribable delight — who has not felt it that deserves the name of scholar—in mousing at choice among the alcoves of antique book-shops especially, and finding the oldest of these sometimes newest of the new, fresher, more suggestive than the book just published and praised in the reviews. Nor is the pleasure scarcely less of cutting the leaves of the new volume, opening by preference at the end rather than title-page, and seizing the author's conclusions at a glance. Very few books repay the reading in course. Nor can we excuse an author if his page does not tempt us to copy passages into our common places, for quotation, proverbs, meditation, or other uses. A good book is fruitful of other books; it perpetuates its fame from age to age, and makes eras in the lives of its readers.—"Tablets: Books."

Next to a friend's discourse, no morsel is more delicious than a ripe book, a book whose flavor is as refreshing at the thou-

sandth tasting as at the first. Books when friends weary, conversation flags, or nature fails to inspire. The best books appeal to the deepest in us and answer the demand. A book loses if wanting the personal element, gains when this is insinuated, or comes to the front occasionally, blending history with mythology.

My favorite books have a personality and complexion as distinctly drawn as if the author's portrait were framed into the paragraphs and smiled upon me as I read his illustrated pages. Nor could I spare them from my table or shelves, though I should not open the leaves for a twelve-month;—the sight of them, the knowledge that they are within reach, accessible at any moment, rewards me when I invite their company. Borrowed books are not mine while in hand. I covet ownership in the contents, and fancy that he who is conversant with these is the rightful owner, and moreover, that the true scholar owes to scholars a catalogue of his chosen volumes, that they may learn from whence his entertainment during leisure moments. Next to a personal introduction, a list of one's favourite authors were the best admittance to his character and manners. . . .

Without Plutarch, no library were complete. Can we marvel at his fame, or overestimate the surpassing merits of his writings? It seems as I read as if none before, none since, had written lives, as if he alone were entitled to the name of bio-

grapher,—such intimacy of insight is his, laying open the springs of character, and through his parallels portraying his times as no historian had done before: not Plato, even, in the livelier way of dialogue with his friends. Then his morals are a statement of the virtues for all times. And I read the list of his lost writings, not without a sense of personal wrong done to me, with emotions akin to what the merchant might feel in perusing the bill of freight after the loss of his vessel. Hercules, Hesiod, Pindar, Leonidas, Scipio, Augustus, Claudius, Epaminondas, minds of mark, all these and other precious pieces gone to the bottom: his books on the Academy of Plato, The Philosophers, and many more of this imperial freight, to be read by none now. Still, there remains so much to be grateful for; so many names surviving to perpetuate virtue and all that is splendid in fame, with his own. I for one am his debtor, not for noble examples alone, but for portraits of the possibilites of virtue, and all that is dearest in friendship, in his attractive pages. It is good exercise, good medicine, the reading of his books,—good for to-day, as in times it was preceding ours, salutary reading for all times.

Montaigne also comes in for a large share of the scholar's regard. Opened anywhere, his page is sensible, marrowy, quotable. He may be taken up, too, and laid aside carelessly without loss, so inconsequent is his method, and he so

careless of his wealth. Professing nature and honesty of speech, his page has the suggestions of the landscape, is good for striking out in any direction, suited to any mood, sure of yielding variety of information, wit, entertainment,—not to be commanded, to be sure, without grave abatements, to be read with good things growing side by side with things not such and tasting of the apple. Still, with every abatement, his book is one of the ripest and mellowest, and, bulky as it is, we wish there were more of it. He seems almost the only author whose success warrants in every stroke of his pen his right to guide it; he of the men of letters, the prince of letters; since writing of life, he omits nothing of its substance, but tells all with a courage unprecedented. His frankness is charming. So his book has indescribable attractions, being as it were a *Private Book*,—his diary self-edited, and offered with an honesty that wins his readers, he never having done bestowing his opulent hospitalities on him, gossiping sagely, and casting his wisdom in sport to any who care for it. Everywhere his page is alive and rewarding, and we are disappointed at finding his book comes to an end like other books.—“*Concord Days: Books.*”

One cannot celebrate books sufficiently. After saying his best, still something better remains to be spoken in their praise. As with friends, one finds new beauties at every



interview, and would stay long in the presence of those choice companions. As with friends, he may dispense with a wide acquaintance. Few and choice. The richest minds need not large libraries. That is a good book which is opened with expectation and closed with profit.

Lord Shaftesbury, writing of the literature of his time, thus happily portrays the qualities of a good book. "No work of wit," he says, "can be esteemed perfect without that strength and boldness of hand which give it body and proportion. A good piece, the painters say, must have good muscling, as well as coloring and drapery. And surely no writing or discourse of any great moment can seem other than enervated, when neither strong reason, nor antiquity, nor the record of things, nor the natural history of man, nor anything which can be called knowledge, dares accompany it except in some ridiculous habit which may give it an air of play and dalliance." . . .

"Were I to be judge and no other to be gratified," says Howell, "I think I should silence whole libraries of authors and reduce the world of books into a parcel; whereas, were another to sit censor, it may be all those I had spared would be condemned to darkness and obtain no exemption from those ruins; and were all to be suppressed which some think unworthy of the light, no more would be left than were before Moses and Trismegistus." . . .

An author who sets his reader on sound-

ing the depths of his own thoughts serves him best, and at the same time teaches the modesty of authorship.

The more life embodied in the book, the more companionable. Like a friend, the volume salutes one pleasantly at every opening of its leaves, and entertains; we close it with charmed memories, and come again and again to the entertainment. The books that charmed us in youth recall the delight ever afterwards; we are hardly persuaded there are any like them, any deserving equally our affections. Fortunate if the best fall in our way during this susceptible and forming period of our lives.

I value books for their suggestiveness even more than for the information they may contain, works that may be taken in hand and laid aside, read at moments, containing sentences that quicken my thoughts and prompt to following these into their relations with life and things. I am stimulated and exalted by the perusal of books of this kind, and should esteem myself fortunate if I might add another to the few which the world shall take to its affections. —“Table Talk: Learning.”

DR. THOS. ARNOLD. *b.* 1795—*d.* 1842.

It is a very hard thing, I suppose, to read at once passionately and critically, by no means to be cold, captious, sneering, or scoffing; to admire greatness and goodness with an intense love and veneration, yet to

judge all things; to be the slave neither of names nor of parties, and to sacrifice even the most beautiful associations for the sake of truth. I would say, as a good general rule, never read the works of any ordinary man, except on scientific matters, or when they contain simple matters of fact. Even on matters of fact, silly and ignorant men, however honest and industrious in their particular subject, require to be read with constant watchfulness and suspicion; whereas great men are always instructive, even amidst much of error on particular points. In general, however, I hold it to be certain, that the truth is to be found in the great men and the error in the little ones.—“Stanley’s Life of Arnold”—Letter to C. J. Vaughan, February 23, 1833.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

*b.* 1800—*d.* 1859.

There is scarcely any delusion which has a better claim to be indulgently treated than that under the influence of which a man ascribes every moral excellence to those who have left imperishable monuments of their genius. The causes of this error lie deep in the inmost recesses of human nature. We are all inclined to judge of others as we find them. Our estimate of a character always depends much on the manner in which that character affects our own interests and passions. We find it difficult

to think well of those by whom we are thwarted or depressed; and we are ready to admit every excuse for the vices of those who are useful or agreeable to us. This is, we believe, one of those illusions to which the whole human race is subject, and which experience and reflection can only partially remove. It is, in the phraseology of Bacon, one of the *idola tribus*. Hence it is that the moral character of a man eminent in letters or in the fine arts is treated often by contemporaries, almost always by posterity, with extraordinary tenderness. The world derives pleasure and advantage from the performances of such a man. The number of those who suffer by his personal vices is small, even in his own time, when compared with the number of those to whom his talents are a source of gratification. In a few years all those whom he has injured disappear. But his works remain, and are a source of delight to millions. The genius of Sallust is still with us. But the Numidiana whom he plundered, and the unfortunate husbands who caught him in their houses at unseasonable hours, are forgotten. We suffer ourselves to be delighted by the keenness of Clarendon's observation, and by the sober majesty of his style, till we forget the oppressor and 'the bigot in the historian. Falstaff and Tom Jones have survived the gamekeepers whom Shakspeare cudgelled, and the landladies whom Fielding bilked. A great writer is the friend and benefactor of his readers; and they cannot but judge

of him under the deluding influence of friendship and gratitude. We all know how unwilling we are to admit the truth of any disgraceful story about a person whose society we like, and from whom we have received favours; how long we struggle against evidence, how fondly, when the facts cannot be disputed, we cling to the hope that there may be some explanation or some extenuating circumstance with which we are unacquainted. Just such is the feeling which a man of liberal education naturally entertains towards the great minds of former ages. The debt which he owes to them is incalculable. They have guided him to truth. They have filled his mind with noble and graceful images. They have stood by him in all vicissitudes, comforters in sorrow, nurses in sickness, companions in solitude. These friendships are exposed to no danger from the occurrences by which other attachments are weakened or dissolved. Time glides on; fortune is inconstant; tempers are soured; bonds which seemed indissoluble are daily sundered by interest, by emulation, or by caprice. But no such cause can affect the silent converse which we hold with the highest of human intellects. That placid intercourse is disturbed by no jealousies or resentments. These are the old friends who are never seen with new faces, who are the same in wealth and in poverty, in glory and in obscurity. With the dead there is no

rivalry. In the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen. Cervantes is never petulant. Demosthènes never comes unseasonably. Dante never stays too long. No difference of political opinion can alienate Cicero. No heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet.—“Critical and Historical Essays: Lord Bacon.”

LORD LYTTON (BULWER). 1803—1873.

“I say, then, that books, taken indiscriminately, are no cure to the diseases and afflictions of the mind. There is a world of science necessary in the taking them. I have known some people in great sorrow fly to a novel, or the last light book in fashion. One might as well take a rose-draught for the plague! Light reading does not do when the heart is really heavy. I am told that Goethe, when he lost his son, took to study a science that was new to him. Ah! Goethe was a physician who knew what he was about. In a great grief like that, you cannot tickle and divert the mind; you must wrench it away, abstract, absorb—bury it in an abyss, hurry it into a labyrinth. Therefore, for the irremediable sorrows of middle life and old age, I recommend a strict chronic course of science and hard reasoning — Counter-irritation. Bring the brain to act upon the heart! If science is too much against the grain (for we have not all got mathematical heads,) something in the reach of the humblest

understanding, but sufficiently searching to the highest—a new language—Greek, Arabic, Scandinavian, Chinese, or Welch ! For the loss of fortune, the dose should be applied less directly to the understanding. —I would administer something elegant and cordial. For as the heart is crushed and lacerated by a loss in the affections, so it is rather the head that aches and suffers by the loss of money. Here we find the higher class of poets a very valuable remedy. For observe that poets of the grander and more comprehensive kind of genius have in them two separate men, quite distinct from each other—the imaginative man, and the practical, circumstantial man ; and it is the happy mixture of these that suits diseases of the mind, half imaginative and half practical. There is Homer, now lost with the gods, now at home with the homeliest, the very ‘poet of circumstance,’ as Grey has finely called him ; and yet with imagination enough to seduce and coax the dullest into forgetting, for a while, that little spot on his desk which his banker’s book can cover. There is Virgil, far below him, indeed—

‘ Virgil the wise,  
Whose verse walks highest, but not flies,’

as Cowley expresses it. But Virgil still has genius enough to be two men—to lead you into the fields, not only to listen to the pastoral reed, and to hear the bees hum, but to note how you can make the most of

the glebe and the vineyard. There is Horace, charming man of the world, who will condole with you feelingly on the loss of your fortune, and by no means undervalue the good things of this life; but who will yet show you that a man may be happy with a *vile modicum* or *parva rura*. There is Shakspeare, who, above all poets, is the mysterious dual of hard sense and empyreal fancy—and a great many more, whom I need not name; but who, if you take to them gently and quietly, will not, like your mere philosopher, your unreasonable stoic, tell you that you have lost nothing; but who will insensibly steal you out of this world, with its losses and crosses, and slip you into another world, before you know where you are!—a world where you are just as welcome, though you carry no more earth of your lost acres with you than covers the sole of your shoe. Then, for hypochondria and satiety, what is better than a brisk alterative course of travels — especially early, out-of-the-way, marvellous, legendary travels! How they freshen up the spirits! How they take you out of the humdrum yawning state you are in. See, with Herodotus, young Greece spring up into life; or note with him how already the wondrous old Orient world is crumbling into giant decay; or go with Carpini and Rubruquis to Tartary, meet 'the carts of Zagathai laden with houses, and think that a great city is travelling towards you.' Gaze on that vast wild empire of the Tartar, where the descen-



dants of Jenghis 'multiply and disperse over the immense waste desert, which is as boundless as the ocean.' Sail with the early northern discoverers, and penetrate to the heart of winter, among sea-serpents and bears, and tusked morses, with the faces of men. Then, what think you of Columbus, and the stern soul of Cortes, and the kingdom of Mexico, and the strange gold city of the Peruvians with that audacious brute, Pizarro? and the Polynesians, just for all the world like the ancient Britons? and the American Indians, and the South-Sea Islanders? how petulant, and young, and adventurous, and frisky your hypochondriac must get upon a regimen like that! Then, for that vice of the mind which I call sectarianism—not in the religious sense of the word, but little, narrow prejudices, that make you hate your next-door neighbour, because he has his eggs roasted when you have yours boiled; and gossiping and prying into people's affairs, and backbiting, and thinking heaven and earth are coming together, if some broom touch a cobweb that you have let grow over the window-sill of your brains—what like a large and generous, mildly aperient (I beg your pardon, my dear) course of history! How it clears away all the fumes of the head!—better than the hellebore with which the old leeches of the middle ages purged the cerebellum. There, amidst all that great whirl and *sturmbad* (storm-bath), as the Germans say, of king-

doms and empires, and races and ages, how your mind enlarges beyond that little, feverish animosity to John Styles; or that unfortunate prepossession of yours, that all the world is interested in your grievances against Tom Stokes and his wife!

"I can only touch, you see, on a few ingredients in this magnificent pharmacy—its resources are boundless, but require the nicest discretion. I remember to have cured a disconsolate widower, who obstinately refused every other medicament, by a strict course of geology. I dipped him deep into gneiss and mica schist. Amidst the first strata, I suffered the watery action to expend itself upon cooling crystallised masses; and, by the time I had got him into the tertiary period, amongst the transition chalks of Maestricht, and the conchiferous marls of Gosau, he was ready for a new wife. Kitty, my dear! it is no laughing matter. I made no less notable a cure of a young scholar at Cambridge, who was meant for the church, when he suddenly caught a cold fit of freethinking, with great shiverings, from wading out of his depth in Spinoza. None of the divines, whom I first tried, did him the least good in that state; so I turned over a new leaf, and doctored him gently upon the chapters of faith in Abraham Tucker's book, (you should read it, Sisty;) then I threw in strong doses of Fichte; after that I put him on the Scotch metaphysicians, with plunge-baths into certain German

transcendentalists; and having convinced him that faith is not an unphilosophical state of mind, and that he might believe without compromising his understanding—for he was mightily conceited on that score—I threw in my divines, which he was now fit to digest; and his theological constitution, since then, has become so robust, that he has eaten up two livings and a deanery! In fact, I have a plan for a library that, instead of heading its compartments, 'Philology, Natural Science, Poetry,' &c., one shall head them according to the diseases for which they are severally good, bodily and mental—up from a dire calamity, or the pangs of the gout, down to a fit of the spleen or a slight catarrh; for which last your light reading comes in with a whey-posset and barley-water. But," continued my father, more gravely, "when some one sorrow, that is yet reparable, gets hold of your mind like a monomania—when you think, because heaven has denied you this or that, on which you had set your heart, that all your life must be a blank—oh! then diet yourself well on biography—the biography of good and great men. See how little a space one sorrow really makes in life. See scarce a page, perhaps, given to some grief similar to your own; and how triumphantly the life sails on beyond it! You thought the wing was broken!—Tut—tut—it was but a bruised feather! See what life leaves behind it when all is done!—a summary of positive facts far out of the region of sorrow and

suffering, linking themselves with the being of the world. Yes, biography is the medicine here! Roland, you said you would try my prescription—here it is,”—and my father took up a book, and reached it to the Captain.

My uncle looked over it—“Life of the Reverend Robert Hall.” “Brother, he was a Dissenter, and, thank heaven! I am a church-and-state man, to the back-bone!”

“Robert Hall was a brave man, and a true soldier under the Great Commander,” said my father, artfully.

The Captain mechanically carried his forefinger to his forehead in military fashion, and saluted the book respectfully.

“I have another copy for you, Pisis-tratus—that is mine which I have lent Roland. This, which I bought for you to-day, you will keep.”

“Thank you, sir,” said I, listlessly, not seeing what great good the “Life of Robert Hall” could do me, or why the same medicine should suit the old weather-beaten uncle, and the nephew yet in his teens.

“I have said nothing,” resumed my father, slightly bowing his broad temples, “of the Book of Books, for that is the *lignum vite*, the cardinal medicine for all. These are but the subsidiaries.”—“The Caxtons: A Family Picture.”

. . . Take away the sword;  
States can be saved without it; bring the  
pen.

“Richelieu.”

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

1803—1882.

But it is not less true that there are books which are of that importance in a man's private experience, as to verify for him the fables of Cornelius Agrippa, of Michael Scott, or of the old Orpheus of Thrace,—books which take rank in our life with parents and lovers and passionate experiences, so medicinal, so stringent, so revolutionary, so authoritative, — books which are the work and the proof of faculties so comprehensive, so nearly equal to the world which they paint, that, though one shuts them with meaner ones, he feels his exclusion from them to accuse his way of living.

Consider what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries, in a thousand years, have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us, the strangers of another age. We owe to books those general benefits which come from high intellectual action. Thus, I think, we often owe to them the perception of immortality. They impart sympathetic activity to the moral

power. Go with mean people, and you think life is mean. Then read Plutarch, and the world is a proud place, peopled with men of positive quality, with heroes and demigods standing around us, who will not let us sleep. Then they address the imagination: only poetry inspires poetry. They become the organic culture of the time. College education is the reading of certain books which the common sense of all scholars agrees will represent the science already accumulated. If you know that,—for instance, in geometry, if you have read Euclid and Laplace,—your opinion has some value; if you do not know these, you are not entitled to give any opinion on the subject. Whenever any sceptic or bigot claims to be heard on the questions of intellect and morals, we ask if he is familiar with the books of Plato, where all his pert objections have once for all been disposed of. If not, he has no right to our time. Let him go and find himself answered there.

Meantime the colleges, whilst they provide us with libraries, furnish no professor of books; and, I think, no chair is so much wanted. In a library we are surrounded by many hundreds of dear friends, but they are imprisoned by an enchanter in these paper and leathern boxes; and though they know us, and have been waiting two, ten, or twenty centuries for us,—some of them,—and are eager to give us a sign, and unbosom themselves, it is the law of their limbo that they must not speak until spoken to; and

as the enchanter has dressed them, like battalions of infantry, in coat and jacket of one cut, by the thousand and ten thousand, your chance of hitting on the right one is to be computed by the arithmetical rule of Permutation and Combination,—not a choice out of three caskets, but out of half a million caskets all alike. But it happens, in our experience, that in this lottery there are at least fifty or a hundred blanks to a prize. It seems, then, as if some charitable soul, after losing a great deal of time among the false books, and alighting upon a few true ones which made him happy and wise, would do a right act in naming those which have been bridges or ships to carry him safely over dark morasses and barren oceans, into the heart of sacred cities, into palaces and temples. This would be best done by those great masters of books who from time to time appear, — the Fabricii, the Seldens, Magliabecchis, Scaligers, Mirandolas, Bayles, Johnsons, whose eyes sweep the whole horizon of learning. But private readers, reading purely for love of the book, would serve us by leaving each the shortest note of what he found.—“Society and Solitude.”

In the highest civilization the book is still the highest delight. He who has once known its satisfactions is provided with a resource against calamity. Like Plato's disciple who has perceived a truth, “he is preserved from harm until another period.”

. . . We find in Sonthey's "Common-place Book" this said of the Earl of Strafford: "I learned one rule of him," says Sir G. Radcliffe, "which I think worthy to be remembered. When he met with a well-penned oration or tract upon any subject, he framed a speech upon the same argument, inventing and disposing what seemed fit to be said upon that subject, before he read the book; then, reading, compared his own with the author's, and noted his own defects and the author's art and fulness; whereby he drew all that ran in the author more strictly, and might better judge of his own wants to supply them." . . .

Original power is usually accompanied with assimilating power, and we value in Coleridge his excellent knowledge and quotations perhaps as much, possibly more, than his original suggestions. If an author give us just distinctions, inspiring lessons, or imaginative poetry, it is not so important to us whose they are. If we are fired and guided by these, we know him as a benefactor, and shall return to him as long as he serves us so well. We may like well to know what is Plato's and what is Montesquieu's or Goethe's part, and what thought was always dear to the writer himself; but the worth of the sentences consists in their radiancy and equal aptitude to all intelligence. They fit all our facts like a charm. We respect ourselves the more that we know them.

Next to the originator of a good sentence



is the first quoter of it. Many will read the book before one thinks of quoting a passage. As soon as he has done this, that line will be quoted east and west. Then there are great ways of borrowing. Genius borrows nobly. When Shakspeare is charged with debts to his authors, Landor replies: "Yet he was more original than his originals. He breathed upon dead bodies and brought them into life." And we must thank Karl Ottfried Müller for the just remark, "Poesy, drawing within its circle all that is glorious and inspiring, gave itself but little concern as to where its flowers originally grew." So Voltaire usually imitated, but with such superiority that Dubuc said: "He is like the false Amphytrion; although the stranger, it is always he who has the air of being master of the house." Wordsworth, as soon as he heard a good thing, caught it up, meditated upon it, and very soon reproduced it in his conversation and writing. If De Quincey said, "That is what I told you," he replied, "No; that is mine—mine, and not yours." On the whole, we like the valor of it. 'T is on Marmontel's principle, "I pounce on what is mine, wherever I find it;" and on Bacon's broader rule, "I take all knowledge to be my province." It betrays the consciousness that truth is the property of no individual, but is the treasure of all men. And inasmuch as any writer has ascended to a just view of man's condition, he has adopted this tone. In so far as the receiver's aim is on life, and not

on literature, will be his indifference to the source. The nobler the truth or sentiment, the less imports the question of authorship. It never troubles the simple seeker from whom he derived such or such a sentiment. Whoever expresses to us a just thought makes ridiculous the pains of the critic who should tell him where such a word had been said before. "It is no more according to Plato than according to me." Truth is always present: it only needs to lift the iron lids of the mind's eye to read its oracles. But the moment there is the purpose of display, the fraud is exposed. In fact, it is as difficult to appropriate the thoughts of others, as it is to invent. Always some steep transition, some sudden alteration of temperature, of point or of view, betrays the foreign interpolation. . . .

We are as much informed of a writer's genius by what he selects as by what he originates. We read the quotation with his eyes, and find a new and fervent sense; as a passage from one of the poets, well recited, borrows new interest from the rendering. As the journals say, "the italics are ours." The profit of books is according to the sensibility of the reader. The profoundest thought or passion sleeps as in a mine, until an equal mind and heart finds and publishes it. . . .

In hours of high mental activity we sometimes do the book too much honor, reading out of it better things than the author wrote,—reading, as we say, between

the lines. You have had the like experience in conversation: the wit was in what you heard, not in what the speakers said. Our best thought came from others. We heard in their words a deeper sense than the speakers put into them, and could express ourselves in other people's phrases to finer purpose than they knew. . . .

We cannot overstate our debt to the Past, but the moment has the supreme claim. The Past is for us; but the sole terms on which it can become ours are its subordination to the Present. Only an inventor knows how to borrow, and every man is or should be an inventor. We must not tamper with the organic motion of the soul. 'T is certain that thought has its own proper motion, and the hints which flash from it, the words overheard at unawares by the free mind, are trustworthy and fertile, when obeyed, and not perverted to low and selfish account. This vast memory is only raw material. The divine gift is ever the instant life, which receives and uses and creates, and can well bury the old in the omnipotency with which Nature decomposes all her harvest for re-composition.—“Letters and Social Aims: Quotation and Originality.”

“Literature is the record of the best thoughts. Every attainment and discipline which increases a man's acquaintance with the invisible world, lifts his being. Every thing that gives him a new perception of beauty, multiplies his pure enjoyments. A

river of thought is always running out of the invisible world into the mind of man. Shall not they who received the largest streams spread abroad the healing waters ?

"Homer and Plato and Pindar and Shakspeare serve many more than have heard their names. Thought is the most volatile of all things. It can not be contained in any cup, though you shut the lid never so tight. Once brought into the world, it runs over the vessel which received it into all minds that love it. The very language we speak thinks for us by the subtle distinctions which already are marked for us by its words, and every one of them is the contribution of the wit of one and another sagacious man in all the centuries of time. Consider that it is our own state of mind at any time that makes our estimate of life and the world. . . . Now, if you can kindle the imagination by a new thought, by heroic histories, by uplifting poetry, instantly you expand,—are cheered, inspired, and become wise, and even prophetic. Music works this miracle for those who have a good ear ; what omniscience has music ! so absolutely impersonal, and yet every sufferer feels his secret sorrow reached. Yet to a scholar the book is as good or better. There is no hour of vexation which, on a little reflection, will not find diversion and relief in the library. His companions are few ; at the moment he has none ; but, year by year, these silent friends supply their place. Many times the reading

of a book has made the fortune of the man,—has decided his way of life. It makes friends. 'Tis the tie between men to have been delighted with the same book. Every one of us is always in search of his friend ; and when, unexpectedly, he finds a stranger enjoying the rare poet or thinker who is dear to his own solitude, it is like finding a brother.

“In books I have the history or the energy of the past. Angels they are to us of entertainment, sympathy, and provocation. With them many of us spend the most of our life,—these silent guides, these tractable prophets, historians, and singers, whose embalmed life is the highest feat of art ; who now cast their moonlight illumination over solitude, weariness, and fallen fortunes. You say 'tis a languid pleasure, Yes ; but its tractableness, coming and going like a dog at your bidding, compensates the quietness, and contrast with the slowness of fortune, and the inaccessibleness of persons. You meet with a man of science, a good thinker or good wit ; but you do not know how to draw out of him that which he knows. But the book is a sure friend, always ready at your first leisure, opens to the very page you desire, and shuts at your first fatigue, as possibly your professor might not.

“It is a tie between men to have read the same book ; and it is a disadvantage not to have read the book your mates have read, or not to have read it at the same time, so that it may take the place in your culture

it does in theirs, and you shall understand their allusions to it, and not give it more or less emphasis than they do. . . .

"In saying these things for books, I do not for a moment forget that they are secondary, mere means, and only used in the off-hours, only in the pause, and, as it were, the sleep, or passive state, of the mind. The intellect reserves all its rights. Instantly, when the mind itself wakes, all books, all past acts are forgotten, huddled aside as impertinent in the august presence of the creator. Their costliest benefit is that they set us free from ourselves; for they wake the imagination and the sentiment, and in their inspirations we dispense with books. Let me add, then, read proudly,—put the duty of being read invariably on the author. If he is not read, whose fault is it? I am quite ready to be charmed, but I shall not make believe I am charmed."—"Address on the Dedication of the Free Library in Concord," May, 1873.

"Let us not forget the genial miraculous force we have known to proceed from a book. We go musing into the vault of day and night; no constellation shines, no muse descends, the stars are white points, the roses brick-colored dust, the frogs pipe, mice peep, and wagons creak along the road. We return to the house and take up Plutarch or Augustine, and read a few sentences or pages, and lo! the air swims with life; the front of heaven is full of fiery

shapes ; secrets of magnanimity and grandeur invite us on every hand ; life is made up of them. Such is our debt to a book."—"The Dial," 1840 : " Thoughts on Modern Literature."

" Whenever I have to do with young men and women, he said, I always wish to know what their books are ; I wish to defend them from bad ; I wish to introduce them to good ; I wish to speak of the immense benefit which a good mind derives from reading, probably much more to a good mind from reading than from conversation. It is of first importance, of course, to select a friend ; for a young man should find a friend a little older than himself, or whose mind is a little older than his own, in order to wake up his genius. That service is performed oftener for us by books. I think, if a very active mind, if a young man of ability, should give you his honest experience, you would find that he owed more impulse to books than to living minds. The great masters of thought, the Platos,—not only those that we call sacred writers, but those that we call profane,—have acted on the mind with more energy than any companions. I think that every remarkable person whom you meet will testify to something like that, that the fast-opening mind has found more inspiration in his book than in his friend. We take the book under great advantages. We read it when we are alone. We read it with an attention not distracted. And,

perhaps, we find there our own thought, a little better, a little maturer, than it is in ourselves." — "Address to the Students (coloured) of Howard University," Washington, January, 1872.

He [Emerson] thinks the stock-writers outnumber the thinking men; the larger share of our authors are merely men of talent, who have some feat to perform with words. "Talent amuses; wisdom instructs. Talent shows what another man can do; genius acquaints me with the spacious circuits of the common nature. The one is carpentry; the other is growth." Our senses are yet too strong for us, usurp our attention from the ideal world; so that we lead lives of routine, instead of those of constant moral inspiration. In books Emerson finds the record of the great inspirations of the past, but they are to be used only as aids to new ones of our own. The moment any book, even the greatest, takes the place to us of insight and inward seeing of the truth, that moment it becomes an injury. Rightly used, books serve us a great purpose as educators, guides, and inspirers. They show us the way other men have gone, help us towards the truth we ourselves wish to reach; but they are the helps, not the source or the end, of culture. Books can not take the place of the soul, and when we have nothing more we are but poorly furnished. To sit in silence with God, in the temple of a free mind, or to wander with him along any of



the ways of Nature, is worth all the books in the world. Whatever the world of books may contain, we are to set sail, with our own thoughts, for that land of divine truth which ever awaits those who have the seeing eye and the hearing ear.—“Ralph Waldo Emerson: His Life, Writings, and Philosophy.” By George Willis Cooke.

REV. F. D. MAURICE. 1805—1872.

Sir Walter Scott has also kindled a healthy desire among us for real histories, not merely historical novels. The demand has been met by many authors, whose patient industry as well as their power of exhibiting acts, and the sources of acts, surely promise that they shall live. Charles Lamb said, in one of his exquisite essays, that there were some histories written in the last age which cannot be called books at all. They were merely the pasteboard covers “History of England,” or “History of the World,” which careful librarians put into their shelves when their books are absent. Some of the historians that our age has produced are books in the truest sense of the word. They illustrate great periods in our own annals, and in the annals of other countries. They show what a divine discipline has been at work to form men: they teach us that there is such a discipline at work to form us into men. That is the test to which I have urged that all books must at last be brought: if they do not bear it their doom is fixed. They

may be light or heavy, the penny sheet, or the vast folio; they may speak of things seen or unseen; of Science or Art; of what has been, or what is to be; they may amuse us, weary us, flatter us, or scorn us; if they do not assist to make us better or more substantial men, they are only providing fuel for a fire larger and more utterly destructive than that which consumed the library of the Ptolemies.—“On Books: An Address delivered to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society,” November, 1865.

SAMUEL PALMER (ARTIST).

b. 1805—d. 1881.

“There is nothing like poetry,” said Charles James Fox, who might often be found engrossed by Virgil’s Eclogues in the intervals of a very different career. I think we may extend his remark, and say, “There is nothing like books.” Of all things sold incomparably the cheapest; of all pleasures the least palling: they take up little room, keep quiet when they are not wanted, and, when taken up, bring us face to face with the choicest men who have ever lived, at their choicest moments. As my walking companion in the country I was so un-English as, on the whole, to prefer my pocket Milton, which I carried for twenty years, to the not unbeloved bull-terrier “Trimmer,” who accompanied me for five: for Milton never fidgeted, frightened horses, ran after sheep, or got run over by a goods-

van.—“Memoir of Samuel Palmer, the artist, by A. H. Palmer, 1882.”

GEORGE S. HILLARD. (AMERICAN  
JURIST, SENATOR, AND AUTHOR).  
b. 1808. [Living.]

In books, be it remembered, we have the best products of the best minds. We should any of us esteem it a great privilege to pass an evening with Shakespeare or Bacon, were such a thing possible. But, were we admitted to the presence of one of these illustrious men, we might find him touched with infirmity or oppressed with weariness, or darkened with the shadow of a recent trouble, or absorbed by intrusive and tyrannous thoughts. To us the oracle might be dumb, and the light eclipsed. But, when we take down one of these volumes, we run no such risk. Here we have their best thoughts embalmed in their best words; immortal flowers of poetry, wet with Castalian dews, and the golden fruit of Wisdom that had long ripened on the bough before it was gathered. Here we find the growth of the choicest seasons of the mind, when mortal cares were forgotten, and mortal weaknesses were subdued; and the soul, stripped of its vanities and its passions, gave forth its highest emanations of truth and beauty. We may be sure that Shakespeare never out-talked his Hamlet, nor Bacon his Essays. Great writers are indeed best known through their books. How little, for instance, do

we know of the life of Shakespeare; but how much do we know of him!

For the knowledge that comes from books, I would claim no more than it is fairly entitled to. I am well aware that there is no inevitable connection between intellectual cultivation, on the one hand, and individual virtue or social well-being, on the other. "The tree of knowledge is not the tree of life." I admit that genius and learning are sometimes found in combination with gross vices, and not unfrequently with contemptible weaknesses; and that a community at once cultivated and corrupt is no impossible monster. But it is no overstatement to say, that, other things being equal, the man who has the greatest amount of intellectual resources is in the least danger from inferior temptations,—if for no other reason, because he has fewer idle moments. The ruin of most men dates from some vacant hour. Occupation is the armour of the soul; and the train of Idleness is borne up by all the vices. I remember a satirical poem, in which the Devil is represented as fishing for men, and adapting his baits to the taste and temperament of his prey; but the idler, he said, pleased him most, because he bit the naked hook. To a young man away from home, friendless and forlorn in a great city, the hours of peril are those between sunset and bed time; for the moon and the stars see more of evil in a single hour than the sun in his whole day's circuit. The poet's visions of evening are all com-

pect of tender and soothing images. It brings the wanderer to his home, the child to his mother's arms, the ox to his stall, and the weary labourer to his rest. But to the gentle-hearted youth who is thrown upon the rocks of a pitiless city, and stands "homeless among a thousand homes," the approach of evening brings with it an aching sense of loneliness and desolation, which comes down upon the spirit like darkness upon the earth. In this mood his best impulses become a snare to him; and he is led astray because he is social, affectionate, sympathetic, and warm-hearted. If there be a young man thus circumstanced within the sound of my voice, let me say to him that books are the friends of the friendless, and that a library is the home of the homeless. A taste for reading will always carry you into the best possible society, and enable you to converse with men who will instruct you by their wisdom, and charm you by their wit; who will soothe you when fretted, refresh you when weary, counsel you when perplexed, and sympathise with you at all times.

C. E. S. STIRLING-MAXWELL (HON.  
MRS. NORTON). 1808—1877.

*To My Books.*

Silent companions of the lonely hour,  
Friends, who can never alter or forsake,  
Who for inconstant roving have no power,  
And all neglect, perforce, must calmly take

Let me return to You; this turmoil ending  
Which worldly cares have in my spirit  
wrought,  
And, o'er your old familiar pages bending, .  
Refresh my mind with many a tranquil  
thought:  
Till, haply meeting there, from time to time,  
Fancies, the audible echo of my own,  
'Twill be like hearing in a foreign clime  
My native language spoke in friendly tone,  
And with a sort of welcome I shall dwell  
On these, my unripe musings, told so well.

REV. ROBERT ARIS WILLMOTT.

1809—1862.

An affecting instance of the tenderness and the compensations of Learning is furnished by the old age of Usher, when no spectacles could help his failing sight, and a book was dark except beneath the strongest light of the window. Hopeful and resigned he continued his task, following the sun from room to room through the house he lived in, until the shadows of the trees disappeared from the grass, and the day was gone. How strange and delightful must have been his feelings, when the sunbeam fell brilliantly upon some half-remembered passage, and thought after thought shone out from the misty words, like the features of a familiar landscape in a clearing fog. Pleasant it would be for us, in our gloomier hours of time and sadness, if

we might imitate that Indian bird which, enjoying the sunshine all the day, secures a faint reflection of it in the night, by sticking glow-worms in the walls of its nest. And something of this light is obtained from the books read in youth, to be remembered in age—

“And summer’s green all girded up in  
sheaves.”

Coleridge said that the scenes of his childhood were so deeply written on his mind, that when upon a still, shining day of summer he shut his eyes, the river Otter ran murmuring down the room, with the soft tints of its waters, the crossing plank, the willows on the margin, and the coloured sands of its bed. What lover of books does know the sweeter memories that haunt his solitude!—“Pleasures, Objects, and Advantages of Literature.”

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

b. 1809. [Living.]

Books are the *negative* pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are produced.

Every library should try to be complete on something, if it were only the history of pin-heads.—“The Poet at the Breakfast Table.”

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

1809—1861.

Or else I sate on in my chamber green,  
And lived my life, and thought my thoughts,  
and prayed

My prayers without the vicar ; read my books,  
Without considering whether they were fit  
To do me good. Mark, there. We get no good  
By being ungenerous, even to a book,  
And calculating profits,—so much help  
By so much reading. It is rather when  
We gloriously forget ourselves and plunge  
Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's pro-  
found,

Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth—  
'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

. . . . .  
Books, books, books !

I had found the secret of a garret-room  
Piled high with cases in my father's name,  
Piled high, packed large,—where, creeping  
in and out

Among the giant fossils of my past,  
Like some small nimble mouse between the  
ribs

Of a mastodon, I nibbled here and there  
At this or that box, pulling through the gap,  
In heats of terror, haste, victorious joy,  
The first book first. And how I felt it beat  
Under my pillow, in the morning's dark,  
An hour before the sun would let me read !  
My books ! At last because the time was ripe,  
I chanced upon the poets.

“Aurora Leigh.”



THEODORE PARKER (AMERICAN  
DIVINE). 1810—1860.

The pleasures of the intellect not creative, but only recipient, have never been fully appreciated. What a joy is there in a good book, writ by some great master of thought, who breaks into beauty, as in summer the meadow into grass and dandelions and violets, with geraniums, and manifold sweetness. As an amusement, that of reading is worth all the rest. What pleasure in science, in literature, in poetry, for any man who will but open his eye and his heart to take it in. What delight an audience of men who never speak, take in some great orator, who looks into their faces, and speaks into their hearts, and then rains a meteoric shower of stars, falling from his heaven of genius before their eyes; or, far better still, with a whole day of sunlight warms his audience, so that every manly and womanly excellence in them buds and blossoms with fragrance, one day to bear most luscious fruit before God, fruit for mortality, fruit for eternity not less. I once knew a hard-working man, a farmer and mechanic, who in the winter-nights rose a great while before day, and out of the darkness coaxed him at least two hours of hard study, and then when the morning opened over the eastern hills, he yoked his oxen and went forth to his daily work, or in his shop he laboured all day long; and when the night came, he read aloud

some simple book to his family; but when they were snugly laid away in their sleep, the great-minded mechanic took to his hard study anew; and so, year out and year in, he went on, neither rich nor much honoured, hardly entreated by daily work, and yet he probably had a happiness in his heart and mind which the whole county might have been proud to share.

I fear we do not know what a power of immediate pleasure and permanent profit is to be had in a good book. The books which help you most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is by easy reading; every man that tries it finds it so. But a great book that comes from a great thinker,—it is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth, with beauty too. It sails the ocean, driven by the winds of heaven, breaking the level sea of life into beauty where it goes, leaving behind it a train of sparkling loveliness, widening as the ship goes on. And what treasures it brings to every land, scattering the seeds of truth, justice, love, and piety, to bless the world in ages yet to come.—“Lessons from *The World of Matter* and *The World of Man*.”

JOHN BRIGHT. b. 1811. [Living.]

What is a great love of books? It is something like a personal introduction to the great and good men of all past times. Books, it is true, are silent as you see

them on their shelves ; but, silent as they are, when I enter a library I feel as if almost the dead were present, and I know if I put questions to these books they will answer me with all the faithfulness and fulness which has been left in them by the great men who have left the books with us. Have none of us, or may I not say are there any of us who have not, felt some of this feeling when in a great library—I don't mean in a library quite so big as that in the British Museum or the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where books are so many that they seem rather to overwhelm one—but libraries that are not absolutely unapproachable in their magnitude? When you are within their walls, and see these shelves, these thousands of volumes, and consider for a moment who they are that wrote them, who has gathered them together, for whom they are intended, how much wisdom they contain, what they tell the future ages, it is impossible not to feel something of solemnity and tranquillity when you are spending time in rooms like these ; and if you come to houses of less note you find libraries that are of great estimation and which in a less degree are able to afford mental aliment to those who are connected with them ; and I am bound to say—and if anyone cares very much for anything else they will not blame me—I say to them, you may have in a house costly pictures and costly ornaments, and a great variety of decoration, yet, so far as my judgment

goes, I would prefer to have one comfortable room well stocked with books to all you can give me in the way of decoration which the highest art can supply. The only subject of lamentation is—one feels that always, I think, in the presence of a library—that life is too short, and I am afraid I must say also that our industry is so far deficient that we seem to have no hope of a full enjoyment of the ample repast that is spread before us. In the houses of the humble a little library in my opinion is a most precious possession. Only the other day I went by accident into the house of a respectable old man in my neighbourhood. He told me that he was then eighty-four years of age. He had a few simple and pleasant pictures on his walls, and on one side, between the fire and the window, was a shelf with a number of books. I daresay I should have found his Bible and probably a Hymn Book, and a score or more of other volumes which to him and his family were precious. That little library, though not exceeding twenty or thirty volumes, was a proof of something higher in that house than unfortunately you will find in many houses in this country. . . . Some twenty years ago I was in Sutherlandshire, on the Elmsdale river engaged in the healthful occupation of endeavouring to get some salmon out of it. In the course of the day, walking down the river, I entered the cottage of a shepherd. There was no one at home, I think, but the shepherd's

wife or mother, I forget which, but she was an elderly woman, matronly, very kind and very courteous to us. Whilst I was in the house I saw upon the window-sill a small and very thin volume, and I took the liberty of going up to it, and taking it in my hand, I found, to my surprise and delight, that it was an edition which I had never met with before or since—an edition of "*Paradise Regained*"—the work of a poet unsurpassed in any country or in any age, and a poem which I believe great authorities admit that if "*Paradise Lost*" did not exist "*Paradise Regained*" would be the finest poem in our language. I said I was surprised and delighted down in this remote country, in this solitary house, in this humble abode of the shepherd, I found this volume which seemed to me to transfigure the cottage. I felt as if that humble dwelling was illumined, as it was, indeed, by the genius of Milton, and, I may say, I took the liberty of asking how the volume came there, and who it was that read it. I learned that the good woman of the house had a son who had been brought up for the ministry, and I think at the time I was there he was then engaged in his labours as a Presbyterian minister in the colony of Canada. Now whenever I think of some of the rivers of Scotland, when I think of the river Elmsdale, if I turn, as my mind does, to that cottage, I always see, and shall never forget, that small, thin volume which I found on the window-sill, and the finding of which seemed to

me to lift the dwellers in that cottage to a somewhat higher sphere. . . . My own impression is that there is no blessing that can be given to an artisan's family more than a love of books. The home influence of such a possession is one which will guard them from many temptations and from many evils. How common it is—in all classes too common—but how common it is amongst what are termed the working classes—I have seen it many times in my district—where even an industrious and careful parent has found that his son or his daughter has been to him a source of great trouble and pain. No doubt, if it were possible, even in one of these homes, to have one single person who was a lover of books, and knows how to spend an evening usefully with a book, and who could occasionally read something from the book to the rest of the family, perhaps to his aged parents, how great would be the blessing to the family, how great a safeguard would be afforded; and then to the men themselves, when they came—as in the case which I have mentioned—to the feebleness of age, and when they can no longer work, and when the sands of life are as it were ebbing out, what can be more advantageous, what more a blessing, than in these years of feebleness—may be sometimes of suffering—it must be often of solitude—if there be the power to derive instruction and amusement and refreshment from books which our great library will offer to every one? To the

young especially this is of great importance, for if there be no seed-time, there will certainly be no harvest, and the youth of life is the seed-time of life. I see in this great meeting a number of young men. It is impossible for anybody to confer upon them a greater blessing than to stimulate them to a firm belief that to them now, and to them during all their lives, it may be a priceless gain that they should associate themselves constantly with this library, and draw from it any books they like. The more they read the more in all probability they will like and wish to read. What can be better than that the fair poetic page, the great instructions of history, the gains of science—all these are laid before us, and of these we may freely partake. I spoke of the library in the beginning of my observations as a fountain of refreshment and instruction and wisdom. Of it may be said that he who drinks shall still thirst, and thirsting for knowledge and still drinking, we may hope that he will grow to a greater mental and moral standard, more useful as a citizen, and more noble as a man.—“Speech at opening of Birmingham New Free Library,” June 1st, 1882.

WENDELL PHILLIPS (AMERICAN  
ORATOR). *b.* 1811. [Living.]

Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company, and education must finish him.

FRANCIS BENNOCH. b. 1812. [Living.]

*My Books.*

I love my books as drinkers love their  
wine;

The more I drink, the more they seem  
divine;

With joy elate my soul in love runs o'er,  
And each fresh draught is sweeter than  
before!

Books bring me friends where'er on earth  
I be,

Solace of solitude,—bonds of society!

I love my books! they are companions dear,  
Sterling in worth, in friendship most sincere;

Here talk I with the wise in ages gone,

And with the nobly gifted of our own:

If love, joy, laughter, sorrow please my  
mind,

Love, joy, grief, laughter in my books I find.

"The Storm and other Poems."

2nd Edit., 1843.

HENRY WARD BEECHER (AMERICAN  
DIVINE). b. 1813. [Living.]

We form judgments of men from little  
things about their houses, of which the  
owner, perhaps, never thinks. In earlier  
years when travelling in the West, where  
taverns were scarce, and in some places un-  
known, and every settler's house was a house  
of entertainment, it was a matter of some



importance and some experience to select wisely where you should put up. And we always looked for flowers. If there were no trees for shade, no patch of flowers in the yard, we were suspicious of the place. But no matter how rude the cabin, or rough the surroundings, if we saw that the window held a little trough for flowers, and that some vines twined about strings let down from the eaves, we were confident that there was some taste and carefulness in the log-cabin. In a new country, where people have to tug for a living, no one will take the trouble to rear flowers unless the love of them is pretty strong; and this taste, blossoming out of plain and uncultivated people, is itself a clump of harebells growing out of the seams of a rock. We were seldom misled. A patch of flowers came to signify kind people, clean beds, and good bread. But in other states of society other signs are more significant. Flowers about a rich man's house may signify only that he has a good gardener, or that he has refined neighbours, and does what he sees them do.

But men are not accustomed to buy *books* unless they want them. If on visiting the dwelling of a man in slender means we find that he contents himself with cheap carpets and very plain furniture in order that he may purchase books, he rises at once in our esteem. Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house. The plainest row of books that cloth or paper ever covered is more

significant of refinement than the most elaborately carved étagère or sideboard. Give us a house furnished with books rather than furniture. Both, if you can, but books at any rate! To spend several days in a friend's house, and hunger for something to read, while you are treading on costly carpets, and sitting on luxuriant chairs, and sleeping upon down, is as if one were bribing your body for the sake of cheating your mind. Is it not pitiable to see a man growing rich, augmenting the comforts of home, and lavishing money on ostentatious upholstery, upon the table, upon everything but what the soul needs? We know of many, and many a rich man's house, where it would not be safe to ask for the commonest English Classics. A few garish Annuals on the table, a few pictorial monstrosities together with the stock religious books of his "persuasion," and that is all! No poets, no essayists, no historians, no travels or biographies,—no select fiction or curious legendary lore. But the wall paper cost three dollars a roll, and the carpet cost four dollars a yard!

Books are the windows through which the soul looks out. A home without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. He cheats them! Children learn to read by being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge

comes with reading and grows upon it. And the love of knowledge, in a young mind, is almost a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices. Let us pity these poor rich men who live barrenly in great bookless houses ! Let us congratulate the poor that, in our day, books are so cheap that a man may every year add a hundred volumes to his library for the price which his tobacco and his beer would cost him. Among the earliest ambitions to be excited in clerks, workmen, journeymen, and, indeed, among all that are struggling up in life from nothing to something, is that of forming and continually adding to a library of good books. A little library growing larger every year, is an honourable part of a man's history. It is a man's duty to have books. A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life.—“ Sermons.”

G. S. PHILLIPS (JANUARY SEARLE).

*b.* about 1816 ; *d.* about 1874.

Books are our household gods ; and we cannot prize them too highly. They are the only gods in all the Mythologies that are ever beautiful and unchangeable ; for they betray no man, and love their lovers. I confess myself an Idolator of this literary religion, and am grateful for the blessed ministry of books. It is a kind of heathenism which needs no missionary funds, no Bible even, to abolish it ; for the Bible

itself caps the peak of this new Olympus, and crowns it with sublimity and glory. Amongst the many things we have to be thankful for, as the result of modern discoveries, surely this of printed books is the highest of all; and I for one, am so sensible of its merits that I never think of the name of Guttenberg without feelings of veneration and homage.

I no longer wonder, with this and other instances before me, why in the old days of reverence and worship, the saints and benefactors of mankind were exalted into a kind of demi-gods, and had worship rendered to their tombs and memories; for this is the most natural, as well as the most touching, of all human generosities, and springs from the profoundest depths of man's nature. Who does not love John Guttenberg?—the man that with his leaden types has made the invisible thoughts and imaginations of the Soul visible and readable to all and by all, and secured for the worthy a double immortality? The birth of this person was an era in the world's history second to none save that of the Advent of Christ. The dawn of printing was the outburst of a new revelation, which, in its ultimate unfoldings and consequences, are alike inconceivable and immeasurable.

I sometimes amuse myself by comparing the condition of the people before the time of Guttenberg, with their present condition; that I may fix the idea of the value and blessedness of books more vividly in my

mind. It is an occupation not without profit, and makes me grateful and contented with my lot. In these reading days one can hardly conceive how our good forefathers managed to kill their superfluous time, or how at least they could be satisfied to kill it as they did. A life without books, when we have said all we can about the honour and nobility of labour, would be something like heaven without God; scarcely to be endured by an immortal nature. And yet this was the condition of things before Guttenberg made his far sounding metallic tongues which reach through all the ages that have since past away, and make us glad with their eloquence.

Formerly, the Ecclesiastics monopolized the literature of the world; they were indeed in many cases the Authors and Transcribers of books; and we are indebted to them for the preservation of the old learning. Now, every Mechanic is the possessor of a Library, and may have Plato and Socrates, as well as Chaucer and the Bards, for his companions. I call this a heavenly privilege, and the greatest of all known miracles, notwithstanding it is so cheap and common. Plato died above two thousand years ago, yet in these printed books he lives and speaks forever. There is no death to thought; which though it may never be imprisoned in lettered language, has nevertheless an existence and propagative vitality as soon as it is uttered, and endures from generation to generation, to

the very end of the world. I think we should all of us be grateful for books : they are our best friends and most faithful companions. They instruct, cheer, elevate, and ennoble us ; and in whatever mood we go to them, they never frown upon us, but receive us with cordial and loving sincerity : neither do they blab, or tell tales of us when we are gone, to the next comer ; but honestly, and with manly frankness, speak to our hearts in admonition or encouragement. I do not know how it is with other men, but I have so much reverence for these silent and beautiful friends that I feel in them to have an immortal and divine possession, which is more valuable to me than many estates and kingdoms. The noise and babble of men disturb me not in my princely domain, enriched by the presence of so many high and royal souls. What can our foolish politicians, and long-winded teachers of less profane things, have to say to me, when Socrates speaks, or Shakspeare and Milton sing ? I like to be alone in my chamber, and obey the muse or the spirit. We make too little of books, and have quite lost the meaning of *contemplation*. Our times are too busy ; too exclusively *outward* in their tendency ; and men have lost their balance in the whirlpools of commerce and the fierce tornadoes of political strife. I want to see more poise in men, more self-possession ; and these can only be obtained by *communion* with books. I lay stress on the word *communion*, because although *reading*

is common enough, *communion* is but little known as a modern experience. If an author be worth anything, he is worth bottoming. It may be all very well to skim milk, for the cream lies on the top; but who could skim Lord Bacon?

The choice of books is not the least part of the duty of a Scholar. If he would become a man, and worthy to deal with manlike things, he must read only the bravest and noblest books; books forged at the heart and fashioned by the intellect of a godlike man. A clever interesting writer, is a clever interesting fool; and is no Master for the scholar I speak of. Our literature abounds with such persons, and will abound with them so long as the public mind remains diseased with this morbid love of “light reading.” We have exchanged the martial tramp of the Commonwealth’s men, for the nimble foot of the lamplighter and the thief-taker. This comes from the false culture of men, and the consequent false tendencies of their minds and aims. We have had enough of this inane, unmanly discipline, and need a higher and truer one. I am not, however, for any Monkish exclusion of men from the world in their study of books; for the end of all study is *action*; and I would not cheat the Master by any bye-laws in favour of the Scholar. But a certain kind of exclusion is necessary for culture in the first instance, and for progressive developments of that culture afterwards. The human mind will not be

played with, or the Player will find it out to his cost. For the laws of the intellect, and of man's Spiritual nature, are as stern and binding as those of matter, and you cannot neglect or violate them without loss or suffering. Hence books should be our constant companions, for they stimulate thought, and hold a man to his purpose.—  
"The Choice of Books."

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY. b. 1816.

[Living.]

Worthy books

Are not companions—they are solitudes ;  
We lose ourselves in them and all our cares.  
"Festus."

SIR ARTHUR HELPS. 1817—1875.

So varied, extensive, and pervading are human distresses, sorrows, short-comings, miseries, and misadventures, that a chapter of aid or consolation never comes amiss, I think. There is a pitiless, pelting rain this morning ; heavily against my study windows drives the north-western gale ; and altogether it is a very fit day for working at such a chapter. The indoor comforts which enable one to resent with composure, nay even to welcome, this outward conflict and hubbub, are like the plans and resources provided by philosophy and religion, to meet the various calamities driven against the



soul in its passage through this stormy world. The books which reward me have been found an equal resource in both respects, both against the weather from without and from within, against physical and mental storms; and, if it might be so, I would pass on to others the comfort which a seasonable word has often brought to me. If I were to look round these shelves, what a host of well-loved names would rise up, in those who have said brave or wise words to comfort and aid their brethren in adversity. It seems as if little remained to be said; but in truth there is always waste land in the human heart to be tilled.—“Friends in Council.”

W. M. THACKERAY. *b.* 1811—*d.* 1863.

Novels are sweets. All people with healthy literary appetites love them—almost all women; a vast number of clever, hard-headed men, judges, bishops, chancellors, mathematicians, are notorious novel-readers, as well as young boys and sweet girls, and their kind, tender mothers.—“Roundabout Papers.”

CHARLES KINGSLEY. 1819—1875.

Except a living man, there is nothing more wonderful than a book!—a message to us from the dead—from human souls whom we never saw, who lived, perhaps, thousands of miles away; and yet these, on

those little sheets of paper, speak to us, amuse us, vivify us, teach us, comfort us, open their hearts to us as brothers. . . . I say we ought to reverence books, to look at them as useful and mighty things. If they are good and true, whether they are about religion or politics, farming, trade, or medicine, they are the message of Christ, the maker of all things, the teacher of all truth.

JOHN RUSKIN. b. 1819. [Living.]

Life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books; and valuable books should, in a civilized country, be within the reach of every one, printed in excellent form, for a just price; but not in any vile, vulgar, or, by reason of smallness of type, physically injurious form, at a vile price. For we none of us need many books, and those which we need ought to be clearly printed, on the best paper, and strongly bound. And though we are, indeed, now, a wretched and poverty-struck nation, and hardly able to keep soul and body together, still, as no person in decent circumstances would put on his table confessedly bad wine, or bad meat without being ashamed, so he need not have on his shelves ill-printed or loosely and wretchedly-stitched books; for, though few can be rich, yet every man who honestly exerts himself may, I think, still provide, for himself and his family, good

shoes, good gloves, strong harness for his cart or carriage horses, and stout leather binding for his books. And I would urge upon every young man, as the beginning of his due and wise provision for his household, to obtain as soon as he can, by the severest economy, a restricted, serviceable, and steadily—however slowly—increasing, series of books for use through life; making his little library, of all the furniture in his room, the most studied and decorative piece; every volume having its assigned place, like a little statue in its niche, and one of the earliest and strictest lessons to the children of the house being how to turn the pages of their own literary possessions lightly and deliberately, with no chance of tearing or dogs' ears.—Preface to "*Sesame and Lilies*."

But, granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humouredly. We

may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a Princess, or arresting the kind glance of a Queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers in pursuit of little more than these; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation;—talk to us in the best words they can choose, and with thanks if we listen to them. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle,—and can be kept waiting round us all day long, not to grant audience, but to gain it;—kings and statesmen lingering patiently in those plainly furnished and narrow anterooms, our book-case shelves,—we make no account of that company,—perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long!

You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves, that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them, and the passion with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this,—that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces;—suppose you

could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two, instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen, all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men;—this station of audience, and honourable privy council, you despise! . . .

Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect that you jostle with the common crowd for *entree* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested, and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

"The place you desire," and the place you *fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labour and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portières of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief question, "Do you deserve to enter?" "Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms?—no. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerable pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognise our presence." . . .

I say first we have despised literature. What do we, as a nation, care about books? How much do you think we spend altogether on our libraries, public or private, as compared with what we spend on our horses? If a man spends lavishly on his library, you call him mad—a biblio-maniac. But you never call any one a horse-maniac, though men ruin themselves every day by their horses, and you do not hear of people ruin-

ing themselves by their books. Or, to go lower still, how much do you think the contents of the bookshelves of the United Kingdom, public and private, would fetch, as compared with the contents of its wine cellars? What position would its expenditure on literature take, as compared with its expenditure on luxurious eating? We talk of food for the mind, as of food for the body: now a good book contains such food inexhaustibly; it is a provision for life, and for the best part of us; yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it! Though there have been men who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs to buy a book, whose libraries were cheaper to them, I think, in the end than most men's dinners are. We are few of us put to such trial, and more the pity; for, indeed, a precious thing is all the more precious to us if it has been won by work or economy; and if public libraries were half as costly as public dinners, or books cost the tenth part of what bracelets do, even foolish men and women might sometimes suspect there was good in reading, as well as in munching and sparkling; whereas the very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth *much*; nor is it serviceable until it has been read, and reread, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want

in it, as a soldier can seize the weapon he needs in an armoury, or a housewife bring the spice she needs from her store. Bread of flour is good; but there is bread, sweet as honey, if we would eat it, in a good book; and the family must be poor indeed which once in their lives, cannot, for such multipliable barley-loaves, pay their baker's bill. We call ourselves a rich nation, and we are filthy and foolish enough to thumb each other's books out of circulating libraries! . . .

Nevertheless I hope it will not be long before royal or national libraries will be founded in every considerable city, with a royal series of books in them; the same series in every one of them, chosen books, the best in every kind, prepared for that national series in the most perfect way possible; their text printed all on leaves of equal size, broad of margin, and divided into pleasant volumes, light in the hand, beautiful, and strong, and thorough as examples of binders' work; and that these great libraries will be accessible to all clean and orderly persons at all times of the day and evening; strict law being enforced for this cleanliness and quietness.

I could shape for you other plans, for art galleries, and for natural history galleries, and for many precious, many, it seems to me, needful, things; but this book plan is the easiest and needfullest, and would prove a considerable tonic to what we call our British constitution, which has



fallen dropsical of late, and has an evil thirst, and evil hunger, and wants healthier feeding. You have got its corn laws repealed for it; try if you cannot get corn laws established for it, dealing in a better bread;—bread made of that old enchanted Arabian grain, the Sesame, which opens doors;—doors, not of robbers', but of Kings' Treasuries.

Friends, the treasuries of true kings are the streets of their cities; and the gold they gather, which for others is as the mire of the streets, changes itself, for them and their people, into a crystalline pavement for evermore.—“Sesame and Lilies: Of Kings' Treasuries.”

MARIAN EVANS (GEORGE ELIOT).  
1820—1881.

At last Maggie's eyes glanced down on the books that lay on the window-shelf, and she half forsook her reverie to turn over listlessly the leaves of the “Portrait Gallery,” but she soon pushed this aside to examine the little row of books tied together with string. “Beauties of the Spectator,” “Rasselas,” “Economy of Human Life,” “Gregory's Letters”—she knew the sort of matter that was inside all these: the “Christian Year”—that seemed to be a hymn-book, and she laid it down again; but *Thomas à Kempis*?—the name had come across her in her reading, and she felt the satisfaction, which every one knows, of get-

ting some ideas to attach to a name that strays solitary in the memory. She took up the little, old, clumsy book with some curiosity: it had the corners turned down in many places, and some hand, now for ever quiet, had made at certain passages strong pen-and-ink marks, long since browned by time. Maggie turned from leaf to leaf, and read where the quiet hand pointed . . . “Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world. . . . If thou seekest this or that, and wouldst be here or there to enjoy thy own will and pleasure, thou shalt never be quiet nor free from care: for in everything somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee. . . . Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross: and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown. . . .”

A strange thrill of awe passed through Maggie while she read, as if she had been awakened in the night by a strain of solemn music, telling of beings whose souls had been astir while hers was in stupor. She went on from one brown mark to another, where the quiet hand seemed to point, hardly conscious that she was reading—seeming rather to listen while a low voice said—“. . . I have often said unto thee, and now again I say the same, Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much

inward peace. . . . Then shall all vain imaginations, evil perturbations, and superfluous cares fly away; then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.”

. . . She read on and on in the old book, devouring eagerly the dialogues with the invisible Teacher, the pattern of sorrow, the source of all strength; returning to it after she had been called away, and reading till the sun went down behind the willows. . . . She knew nothing of doctrines and systems—of mysticism or quietism; but this voice out of the far-off middle ages was the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience, and came to Maggie as an unquestioned message.

I suppose that is the reason why the small old-fashioned book, for which you need only pay sixpence at a book-stall, works miracles to this day, turning bitter waters into sweetness: while expensive sermons and treatises, newly issued, leave all things as they were before. It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's prompting; it is the chronicle of a solitary, hidden anguish, struggle, trust and triumph—not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolations: the voice of a brother who, ages ago, felt and suffered and renounced—in the cloister, perhaps with serge gown and tonsured head,

with much chanting and long fasts, and with a fashion of speech different from ours—but under the same silent far-off heavens, and with the same passionate desires, the same strivings, the same failures, the same weariness.—“*The Mill on the Floss*,” Book iv., Chap. iii.

GEORGE DAWSON. 1821—1876.

The great consulting room of a wise man is a library. When I am in perplexity about life, I have but to come here, and, without fee or reward, I commune with the wisest souls that God has blest the world with. If I want a discourse on immortality Plato comes to my help. If I want to know the human heart Shakspeare opens all its chambers. Whatever be my perplexity or doubt I know exactly the great man to call to me, and he comes in the kindest way, he listens to my doubts and tells me his convictions. So that a library may be regarded as the solemn chamber in which a man can take counsel with all that have been wise and great and good and glorious amongst the men that have gone before him. If we come down for a moment and look at the bare and immediate utilities of a library we find that here a man gets himself ready for his calling, arms himself for his profession, finds out the facts that are to determine his trade, prepares himself for his examination. The utilities of it are endless and priceless. It is too a place of pastime; for

man has no amusement more innocent, more sweet, more gracious, more elevating, and more fortifying than he can find in a library. If he be fond of books, his fondness will discipline him as well as amuse him. . . .

I go into my library as to a hermitage—and it is one of the best hermitages the world has. What matters the scoff of the fool when you are safely amongst the great men of the past? How little of the din of this stupid world enters into a library, how hushed are the foolish voices of the world's hucksterings, barterings, and bickerings! How little the scorn of high or low, or the mad cries of party spirit can touch the man who in this best hermitage of human life draws around him the quietness of the dead and the solemn sanctities of ancient thought! Thus, whether I take it as a question of utility, of pastime or of high discipline I find the library—with but one or two exceptions—the most blessed place that man has fashioned or framed. The man who is fond of books is usually a man of lofty thought, of elevated opinions. A library is the strengthener of all that is great in life and the repeller of what is petty and mean; and half the gossip of society would perish if the books that are truly worth reading were but read.

When we look through the houses of a large part of the middle classes of this country we find there everything but what

there ought most to be. There are no books in them worth talking of. If a question arises of geography they have no atlases. If the question be when a great man was born they cannot help you. They can give you a gorgeous bed, with four posts, marvellous adornments, luxurious hangings and lacquered shams all round; they can give you dinners *ad nauseam* and wine that one can, or cannot, honestly praise. But useful books are almost the last things that are to be found there; and when the mind is empty of those things that books can alone fill it with, then the seven devils of pettiness, frivolity, fashionableness, gentility, scandal, small slander and the chronicling of small beer come in and take possession of the mind. Half this nonsense would be dropped if men would only understand the elevating influences of their communing constantly with the lofty thoughts and the high resolves of men of old times.

But as we cannot dwell upon all the uses and beauties of a library, let us pass on to see that this is a Corporation Library, and in that we see one of the greatest and happiest things about it, for a library, supported, as this is, by rates and administered by a Corporation, is the expression of a conviction on your part that a town like this exists for moral and intellectual purposes. It is a proclamation that a great community like this is not to be looked upon as a fortuitous concourse of human atoms, or as a miserable knot of vipers

struggling in a pot, each aiming to get his head above the other in the fierce struggle of competition. It is a declaration that the Corporation of a great town like this has not done all its duty when it has put in action a set of ingenious contrivances for cleaning and lighting the streets, for breaking stones, for mending ways; and has not fulfilled its highest functions even when it has given the people of the town the best system of drainage—though that is not yet attained. Beyond all these things the Corporation of a borough like this has every function to discharge that is discharged by the master of a household—to minister to men by every office, that of the priest alone excepted. And mark this: I would rather a great book or a great picture fell into the hands of a Corporation than into the hands of an individual, for great and noble as has been the spirit of many of our collectors, when a great picture is in the hands of a nobleman however generous, or of a gentleman however large-hearted he may be, he will have his heirs, narrow-minded fools perhaps, or a successor pitifully selfish and small; and this great picture that God never intended to be painted for the delight of but one noble family, or the small collection of little people it gathers around it, may be shut up through the whim of its owner or the caprice of its master, or in self-defence against the wanton injury that some fool may have done it. But the moment you

put great works into the hands of a Corporate body like this you secure permanence of guardianship in passionless keeping. A Corporation cannot get out of temper, or if it does it recovers itself quickly. A Corporation could not shut up this Library. It is open for ever. It is under the protection of the English law in all its majesty. Its endurance will be the endurance of the English nation. Therefore when a Corporation takes into its keeping a great picture or a great collection of books, that picture and those books are given to the multitude and are put into the best keeping, the keeping of those who have not the power, even if they had the will, to destroy. The time of private ownership has, I hope, nearly come to an end—not that I would put an end to it by law or by any kind of violence; but I hope we shall in the open market bid against the nobility, gentry, and private collectors, for it is a vexation when a great picture or a great collection of books is shut up in a private house. . . .

Then we have to consider that this is a Reference Library. The books in this room are not to go out of it. They remain here to be consulted but not to be taken away. Many of them are too ponderous to be removed. Many of them are too precious to be trusted even from this room to a private house. Here they are to be fixtures. The reader is to come to them—and very properly too, for where books are so great, as many of these are in every sense, it is more



decent that the reader wait upon the book than that the book wait upon the reader. You should come to these mighty masters and not ask them to come to you. One of the principles that guides the selection of a Library like this is cost and dearness. If I had my will there should not be a single cheap book in this room. If you want cheap books buy them. You can have "Waverley" for sixpence and the choice of two editions. The object of a Library like this is to buy dear books—to buy books that the lover of books cannot afford to buy; to put at the service of the poorest, books that the richest can scarce afford. Even the united incomes of some score of you would not purchase the books that are in this room now. They have cost £5,000 already, and that is but the beginning of endless fives long drawn out. The object is to bring together in this room a supply of what the private man cannot compass, and what the wisest man only wants to put to occasional use. One of the great offices of a Reference Library like this is to keep at the service of everybody what everybody cannot keep at home for his own service. It is not convenient to every man to have a very large telescope; I may wish to study the skeleton of a whale but my house is not large enough to hold one; I may be curious in microscopes but I may have no money to buy one of my own. But provide an institution like this and here is the telescope, here is the microscope, and here the skeleton of the whale. Here are

the great picture, the mighty book, the ponderous atlas, the great histories of the world. They are here always ready for the use of every man without his being put to the cost of purchase or the discomfort of giving them house room. Here are books that we only want to consult occasionally and which are very costly. These are the books proper for a Library like this—mighty cyclopædias, prodigious charts, books that only Governments can publish. It is almost the only place where I would avoid cheapness as a plague and run away from mean printing and petty pages with disgust. This is a room for the luxuries of literature, for the mighty folio and the glorious quarto. This is a room where you must have a strong table to bear up the precious volume, where when you open a book you will take a long breath before you begin to read the great pages; and therefore not a library of cheapness but a library of dearness, where the gems are too precious for the private man's purchase and too glorious for the private man's safe keeping. . . .

There are few things, Mr. Mayor, that I would more willingly share with you than the desire that, in days to come, when some student, in a fine rapture of gratitude, as he sits in this room, may for a moment call to mind the names of the men, who by speech and by labour, by the necessary agitation or the continuous work, took part in founding this Library. There are few places I would rather haunt after my death than

this room, and there are few things I would have my children remember more than this, that this man spoke the discourse at the opening of this glorious Library, the first-fruits of a clear understanding that a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation—that a town exists here by the grace of God, that a great town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped, all the highest, loftiest, and truest ends of man's intellectual and moral nature. I wish then for you, Mr. Mayor, and for myself, that, in years to come, when we are in some respects forgotten, still now and then, in this room, the curious questions may be asked: Who was mayor on that famous day? who said grace before that famous banquet? who returned thanks for that gracious meal? who gathered these books together? who was the first man that held that new office of Librarian? I trust his name will be printed whenever the name of this Corporation appears. What his title is to be I don't know—whether it is to be Town Librarian or Corporation Librarian—but I envy him whatever it may be, and I am glad the Corporation has given itself an officer who represents intellect—that it looks upward deliberately and says: We are a Corporation who have undertaken the highest duty that is possible to us: we have made provision for our people—for *all* our

people—and we have made a provision of God's greatest and best gifts unto man.—  
“Inaugural Address, on the Opening of the Birmingham Free Reference Library, Oct. 26, 1866.”

CHARLES BUXTON. 1822—1871.

Readers abuse writers and say their writing is wretched stuff, stale nonsense, and so on. But what might not writers justly say of their readers? What poor, dull, indolent, feeble, careless minds do they bring to deal with thoughts whose excellence lies deep! A reader's highest achievement is to succeed in forming a true and clear conception of the author from his works.

We are richer than we think. And now and then it is not a bad thing to make a catalogue raisonné of the things that are helping to make us happy. It is astonishing how long the list is. The poorest of us has property, the value of which is almost boundless; but there is not one of us who might not so till that property as to make it yield tenfold more. Our books, gardens, families, society, friends, talk, music, art, poetry, scenery, might all bring forth to us far greater wealth of enjoyment and improvement if we tried to squeeze the very utmost out of them.

Reading spreads facts, like manure, over the surface of the mind; but it is thought that ploughs them in.

If you have only time to read one book, besides the Bible, why not read that book which is fullest of wisdom, fullest of wit, fullest of humour, fullest of sweetness, fullest of imagination, fullest of beauty, fullest of fancy, fullest of insight into human nature, of all the books in the world? No man is too busy to read Shakespeare.

I like the word *Works* as applied to an Author's writings. Works they are truly, aye, and hard works too. How little does the public dream of the toil of mind and the hopes and fears, that have gone to the making of that book which they order from Mudie's, and skim through, and then say, It's not worth reading!—"Notes of Thought."

DR. J. A. LANGFORD. b. 1823.

[Living.]

The love of books is a love which requires neither justification, apology, nor defence. It is a good thing in itself : a possession to be thankful for, to rejoice over, to be proud of, and to sing praises for. With this love in his heart no man is ever poor, ever without friends, or the means of making his life lovely, beautiful, and happy. In prosperity or adversity, in joy or sorrow, in health or sickness, in solitude or crowded towns, books are never out of place, never without the power to comfort, console, and bless. They add wealth to prosperity, and make sweeter the sweet uses of adversity; they

intensify joy and take the sting from, or give a bright relief to sorrow; they are the glorifiers of health and the blessed consolers of sickness; they people solitude with the creations of thought, the children of fancy, and the offsprings of imagination, and to the busy haunts of men they lend a purpose and an aim, and tend to keep the heart unspotted in the world. It is better to possess this love than to inherit a kingdom, for it brings wealth which money can never buy, and which power is impotent to secure. It is better than gold, "yea, than much fine gold," and splendid palaces and costly raiment. No possession can surpass, or even equal, a good library to the lover of books. Here are treasured up for his daily use and delectation riches which increase by being consumed, and pleasures which never cloy. It is a realm as large as the universe, every part of which is peopled by spirits who lay before his feet their precious spoils as his lawful tribute. For him the poet sing, the philosophers discourse, the historians unfold the wonderful march of life, and the searchers of nature reveal the secrets and mysteries of creation. No matter what his rank or position may be, the lover of books is the richest and the happiest of the children of men. . . .

The only true equalisers in the world are books; the only treasure-house open to all comers is a library; the only wealth which will not decay is knowledge; the only jewel which you can carry beyond the grave is

wisdom. To live in this equality, to share in these treasures, to possess this wealth, and to secure this jewel may be the happy lot of every one. All that is needed for the acquisition of these inestimable treasures is, the love of books. . . .

At such periods of sweet relaxation the lighter kind of books are the best of companions, for they give of their pleasant stores and demand nothing in return. You can sit with them on your desk, or in your hand, or on your knee, and let them remain unnoticed as long as your idle mood lasts and they will not be offended at your neglect. You can turn over their leaves, pausing here and there at a page at your will, or whenever a passage seems to accord with your varying humour, and they will take it all in good part, nor be hurt at your trifling with their feelings. They will add a sweet *insouciance* to your moments of delightful indolence, which are felt as the pleasantest experiences of life. As companions and acquaintances books are without rivals; and they are companions and acquaintances to be had at all times and under all circumstances. They are never out when you knock at the door; are never "not at home," when you call. In the lightest as well as in the deepest moods they may be applied to, and will never be found wanting. In the good sense of the phrase, they are all things to all men, and are faithful alike to all. . . .

As friends and companions, as teachers

and consolers, as recreators and amusers books are always with us, and always ready to respond to our wants. We can take them with us in our wanderings, or gather them around us at our firesides. In the lonely wilderness, and the crowded city, their spirit will be with us, giving a meaning to the seemingly confused movements of humanity, and peopling the desert with their own bright creations. Without the love of books the richest man is poor; but endowed with this treasure of treasures, the poorest man is rich. He has wealth which no power can diminish; riches which are always increasing; possessions which the more he scatters the more they accumulate; friends who never desert him, and pleasures which never cloy.—“The Praise of Books.” (By permission of Messrs. Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co.)

ROBERT COLLYER (AMERICAN DIVINE).

Born at Ilkley, in Yorkshire, 1823.

[Living.]

Those who must be their own helpers need not be one whit discouraged. The history of the world is full of bright examples of the value of self-training, as shown by the subsequent success won as readers, and writers, and workers in every department of life by those who apparently lacked both books to read and time to read them, or even the candle wherewith to light



the printed page. It would be easy to fill this whole series of chapters with accounts of the way in which the reading habit has been acquired and followed in the face of every obstacle. But a single bit of personal reminiscence may be taken as the type of thousands; not only because of its touching beauty and its telling force, but because it is the latest to be told. To-morrow some other man of eminence will add no less strong testimony to the possibility of self-education. It is the story told by the Rev. Robert Collyer, who worked his way from the anvil in a little English town, up to a commanding position among American preachers and writers. "Do you want to know," he asked, "how I manage to talk to you in this simple Saxon? I will tell you. I read Bunyan, Crusoe, and Goldsmith when I was a boy, morning, noon, and night. All the rest was task work, these were my delight, with the stories in the Bible, and with Shakespeare when at last the mighty master came within our doors. The rest were as senna to me. These were like a well of pure water, and this is the first step I seem to have taken of my own free will toward the pulpit. . . . I took to these as I took to milk, and, without the least idea what I was doing, got the taste for simple words into the very fibre of my nature. There was day-school for me until I was eight years old, and then I had to turn in and work thirteen hours a day. . . . From the days when we used to spell out

Crusoe and old Bunyan there had grown up in me a devouring hunger to read books. It made small matter what they were, so they were books. Half a volume of an old encyclopædia came along—the first I had ever seen. How many times I went through that I cannot even guess. I remember that I read some old reports of the Missionary Society with the greatest delight. There were chapters in them about China and Labrador. Yet I think it is in reading as it is in eating, when the first hunger is over you begin to be a little critical, and will by no means take to garbage if you are of a wholesome nature. And I remember this because it touches this beautiful valley of the Hudson. I could not go home for the Christmas of 1839, and was feeling very sad about it all, for I was only a boy; and sitting by the fire, an old farmer came in and said: ‘I notice thou’s fond o’ reading, so I brought thee summat to read.’ It was Irving’s ‘Sketch Book.’ I had never heard of the work. I went at it, and was ‘as them that dream.’ No such delight had touched me since the old days of Crusoe. I saw the Hudson and the Catskills, took poor Rip at once into my heart, as everybody has, pitied Ichabod while I laughed at him, thought the old Dutch feast a most admirable thing, and long before I was through, all regret at my lost Christmas had gone down the wind, and I had found out there are books and books. That vast hunger to read never left me. If there was no candle, I poked

my head down to the fire; read while I was eating, blowing the bellows, or walking from one place to another. I could read and walk four miles an hour. The world centred in books. There was no thought in my mind of any good to come out of it; the good lay in the reading. I had no more idea of being a minister than you elder men who were boys then, in this town, had that I should be here to-night to tell this story. Now, give a boy a passion like this for anything, books or business, painting or farming, mechanism or music, and you give him thereby a lever to lift his world, and a patent of nobility, if the thing he does is noble. There were two or three of my mind about books. We became companions, and gave the roughs a wide berth. The books did their work too, about that drink, and fought the devil with a finer fire. I remember while I was yet a lad reading Macaulay's great essay on Bacon, and I could grasp its wonderful beauty. There has been no time when I have not felt sad that there should have been no chance for me at a good education and training. I miss it every day, but such chances as were left lay in that everlasting hunger to still be reading. I was tough as leather, and could do the double stint, and so it was that, all unknown to myself, I was as one that soweth good seed in his field."—  
"The Choice of Books," by Charles F. Richardson.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE. *b.* 1815—*d.* 1882.

Now, my young friends, to whom I am addressing myself, with reference to this habit of reading, I make bold to tell you that it is your pass to the greatest, the purest, and the most perfect pleasure that God has prepared for his creatures. Other pleasures may be more ecstatic. When a young man looks into a girl's eye for love, and finds it there, nothing may afford him greater joy for the moment; when a father sees a son return after a long absence, it may be a great pleasure for the moment; but the habit of reading is the only enjoyment I know, in which there is no alloy. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will be there to support you when all other recreations are gone. It will be present to you when the energies of your body have fallen away from you. It will last you until your death. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live. But, my friends, you cannot acquire that habit in your age. You cannot acquire it in middle age; you must do it now, when you are young. You must learn to read and to like reading now, or you cannot do so when you are old.—“Speech at the Opening of the Art Exhibition at the Bolton Mechanics’ Institution,” Dec. 7, 1868.

JAMES HAIN FRISWELL.

*b.* 1827—*d.* 1878.

When a man loves books he has in him that which will console him under many

sorrows and strengthen him in various trials. Such a love will keep him at home, and make his time pass pleasantly. Even when visited by bodily or mental affliction, he can resort to this book-love and be cured. . . . And when a man is at home and happy with a book, sitting by his fireside, he must be a churl if he does not communicate that happiness. Let him read now and then to his wife and children. Those thoughts will grow and take root in the hearts of the listeners. Good scattered about is indeed the seed of the sower. A man who feels sympathy with what is good and noble is, at the time he feels that sympathy, good and noble himself.

To a poor man book-love is not only a consoling preservative, but often a source of happiness, power, and wealth. It lifts him from the mechanical drudgery of the day. It takes him away from bad companions, and gives him the close companionship of a good and fine-thinking man; for, while he is reading Bacon or Shakspeare, he is talking with Bacon or Shakspeare. While his body is resting, his mind is working and growing. . .

But, beyond improving nations, books have improved the human race. "It is a blessed thing," says an author, "to write books which shall abate prejudices, and unlock the human heart, and make the kindly sympathies flow." Blessed indeed! and such writers are more than kings and priests; for they rule over loving and willing subjects, and they minister within the sacred precincts of the heart itself. . . . It is

true that this priesthood is of no Church, and is not in orders; but it is not the less important on that account. What a power does a writer hold who addresses every week, or every day, or month, a larger congregation than a hundred churches could hold! There are many writers of the present day who address as many, nay, more than the number indicated, if we put it at its largest.

This importance of the priesthood of letters is carried yet further if we remember that the words of a preacher fall on our ears and are often forgotten, while those of the writer remain. Ink-stains are difficult to get out: there is nothing so imperishable as a book.—“*The Gentle Life*,” Second Series: *On Book Love*.

FREDERICK HARRISON. b. 1831.

[Living.]

Every book that we take up without a purpose is an opportunity lost of taking up a book with a purpose—every bit of stray information which we cram into our heads without any sense of its importance, is for the most part a bit of the most useful information driven out of our heads and choked off from our minds. It is so certain that information, that is, the knowledge, the stored thoughts and observations of mankind, is now grown to proportion, so utterly incalculable and prodigious, that even the learned whose lives are given to

study can but pick up some crumbs that fall from the table of truth. They delve and tend but a plot in that vast and teeming kingdom, whilst those whom active life leaves with but a few cramped hours of study can hardly come to know the very vastness of the field before them, or how infinitesimally small is the corner they can traverse at the best. We know all is not of equal value. We know that books differ in value as much as diamonds differ from the sand on the seashore, as much as our living friend differs from a dead rat. We know that much in the myriad-peopled world of books—very much in all kinds—is trivial, enervating, inane, even noxious. And thus, where we have infinite opportunities of wasting our efforts to no end, of fatiguing our minds without enriching them, of clogging the spirit without satisfying it, there, I cannot but think, the very infinity of opportunities is robbing us of the actual power of using them. And thus I come often, in my less hopeful moods, to watch the remorseless cataract of daily literature which thunders over the remnants of the past, as if it were a fresh impediment to the men of our day in the way of systematic knowledge and consistent powers of thought: as if it were destined one day to overwhelm the great inheritance of mankind in prose and verse.

I think the habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits to acquire, needing strong resolution and infinite pains ;

and I hold the habit of reading for mere reading's sake, instead of for the sake of the stuff we gain from reading, to be one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have. Why do we still suffer the traditional hypocrisy about the dignity of literature, literature I mean in the gross, which includes about equal parts of what is useful and what is useless? Why are books as books, writers as writers, readers as readers, meritorious and honourable, apart from any good in them, or anything that we can get from them? Why do we pride ourselves on our powers of absorbing print, as our grandfathers did on their gifts in imbibing port, when we know that there is a mode of absorbing print which makes it impossible we can ever learn anything good out of books? Our stately Milton said in a passage which is one of the watchwords of the English race, "as good almost Kill a Man as Kill a good Book." But has he not also said that he would "have a vigilant eye how Bookes demeane themselves as well as men, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors?" Yes! they do kill the good book who deliver up their few and precious hours of reading to the trivial book; they make it dead for them; they do what lies in them to destroy "the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life;" they "spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Bookes." For in the wilderness of books



most men, certainly all busy men, *must* strictly choose. If they saturate their minds with the idler books, the "good book," which Milton calls "an immortality rather than a life," is dead to them: it is a book sealed up and buried.

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON.

b. 1834. [Living.]

People whose time for reading is limited ought not to waste it in grammars and dictionaries, but to confine themselves resolutely to a couple of languages, or three at the very utmost, notwithstanding the contempt of polyglots, who estimate your learning by the variety of your tongues. It is a fearful throwing away of time, from the literary point of view, to begin more languages than you can master or retain, and to be always puzzling yourself about irregular verbs. . . .

The encouraging inference which you may draw from this in reference to your own case is that, since all intellectual men have had more than one pursuit, you may set off your business against the most absorbing of their pursuits, and for the rest be still almost as rich in time as they have been. You may study literature as some painters have studied it, or science as some literary men have studied it. The first step is to establish a regulated economy of your time, so that, without interfering with a due attention to business and to health, you

may get two clear hours every day for reading of the best kind. It is not much, some men would tell you that it is not enough, but I purposely fix the expenditure of time at a low figure because I want it to be always practicable consistently with all the duties and necessary pleasures of your life. If I told you to read four hours every day, I know beforehand what would be the consequence. You would keep the rule for three or four days, by an effort, then some engagement would occur to break it, and you would have no rule at all. And please observe that the two hours are to be given quite regularly, because, when the time given is not much, regularity is quite essential. Two hours a day, regularly, make more than seven hundred hours in a year, and in seven hundred hours, wisely and uninterruptedly occupied, much may be done in anything. Permit me to insist upon that word *uninterruptedly*. Few people realize the full evil of an interruption, few people know all that is implied by it. . . .

But now suppose a reader perfectly absorbed in his author, an author belonging very likely to another age and another civilization entirely different from ours. Suppose that you are reading the Defence of Socrates in Plato, and have the whole scene before you as in a picture: the tribunal of the Five Hundred, the pure Greek architecture, the interested Athenian public, the odious Melitus, the envious enemies, the beloved and grieving friends whose names

are dear to us, and immortal; and in the centre you see one figure draped like a poor man, in cheap and common cloth, that he wears winter and summer, with a face plain to downright ugliness, but an air of such genuine courage and self-possession that no acting could imitate it; and you hear the firm voice saying—

The man, then, judges me worthy of death.  
Be it so.

You are just beginning the splendid paragraph where Socrates condemns himself to maintenance in the Prytaneum, and if you can only be safe from interruption till it is finished, you will have one of those minutes of noble pleasure which are the rewards of intellectual toil. But if you are reading in the daytime in a house where there are women and children, or where people can fasten upon you for pottering details of business, you may be sure that you will *not* be able to get to the end of the passage without in some way or other being rudely awakened from your dream, and suddenly brought back into the common world. The loss intellectually is greater than anyone who had not suffered from it could imagine. People think that an interruption is merely the unhooking of an electric chain, and that the current will flow, when the chain is hooked on again just as it did before. To the intellectual and imaginative student an interruption is not that; it is the destruction of a picture. ‘ . . .

There is a degree of incompatibility between the fashionable and the intellectual lives, which makes it necessary, at a certain time, to choose one or the other as our own. There is no hostility, there need not be any uncharitable feeling on one side or the other, but there must be a resolute choice between the two. If you decide for the intellectual life, you will incur a definite loss to set against your gain. Your existence may have calmer and profounder satisfactions, but it will be less amusing, and even in an appreciable degree less *human*; less in harmony, I mean, with the common instincts and feelings of humanity. For the fashionable world, although decorated by habits of expense, has enjoyment for its objects, and arrives at enjoyment by those methods which the experience of generations has proved most efficacious. Variety of amusement, frequent change of scenery and society, healthy exercise, pleasant occupation of the mind without fatigue—these things do indeed make existence agreeable to human nature, and the science of living agreeably is better understood in the fashionable society of England than by laborious students and *savans*. The life led by that society is the true heaven of the natural man, who likes to have frequent feasts and a hearty appetite, who enjoys the varying spectacle of wealth, and splendour, and pleasure, who loves to watch, from the Olympus of his personal ease, the curious results of labour in which he

takes no part, the interesting ingenuity of the toiling world below. In exchange for these varied pleasures of the spectator, the intellectual life can offer you but one satisfaction; for all its promises are reducible simply to this, that you shall come at last, after infinite labour, into contact with some great *reality*—that you shall know and do in such sort that you will feel yourself on firm ground and be recognized—probably not much applauded, but yet recognized—as a fellow-labourer by other knowers and doers. Before you come to this, most of your present accomplishments will be abandoned by yourself as unsatisfactory and insufficient, but one or two of them will be turned to better account, and will give you after many years a tranquil self-respect, and what is still rarer and better, a very deep and earnest reverence for the greatness which is above you. Severed from the vanities of the Illusory, you will live with the realities of knowledge, as one who has quitted the painted scenery of the theatre to listen by the eternal ocean or gaze at the granite hills. . . .

The art of reading is to skip judiciously. Whole libraries may be skipped in these days, when we have the results of them in our modern culture without going over the ground again. And even of the books we decide to read, there are almost always large portions which do not concern us, and which we are sure to forget the day after we have read them. The art is to skip all

that does not concern us, whilst missing nothing that we really need. No external guidance can teach us this; for nobody but ourselves can guess what the needs of our intellect may be. But let us select with decisive firmness, independently of other people's advice, independently of the authority of custom. In every newspaper that comes to hand there is a little bit that we ought to read; the art is to find that little bit, and waste no time over the rest. . . .

I used to believe a great deal more in opportunities and less in application than I do now. Time and health are needed, but with these there are always opportunities. Rich people have a fancy for spending money very uselessly on their culture because it seems to them more valuable when it has been costly; but the truth is, that by the blessing of good and cheap literature, intellectual light has become almost as accessible as daylight. I have a rich friend who travels more, and buys more costly things, than I do, but he does not really learn more or advance farther in the twelvemonth. If my days are fully occupied, what has he to set against them? only other well-occupied days, no more. If he is getting benefit at St. Petersburg he is missing the benefit I am getting round my house, and in it. The sum of the year's benefit seems to be surprisingly alike in both cases. So if you are reading a piece of thoroughly good literature, Baron Rothschild may possibly be as well occupied as you—he

is certainly not better occupied. When I open a noble volume I say to myself, "now the only Cræsus that I envy is he who is reading a better book than this." . . .

I willingly concede all that you say against fashionable society as a whole. It is, as you say, frivolous, bent on amusement, incapable of attention sufficiently prolonged to grasp any serious subject, and liable both to confusion and inaccuracy in the ideas which it hastily forms or easily receives. You do right, assuredly, not to let it waste your most valuable hours, but I believe also that you do wrong in keeping out of it altogether.

The society which seems so frivolous in masses contains individual members who, if you knew them better, would be able and willing to render you the most efficient intellectual help, and you miss this help by restricting yourself exclusively to books. Nothing can replace the conversation of living men and women; not even the richest literature can replace it. . . .

The solitude which is really injurious is the severance from all who are capable of understanding us. Painters say that they cannot work effectively for very long together when separated from the society of artists, and that they must return to London, or Paris, or Rome, to avoid an oppressive feeling of discouragement which paralyses their productive energy. Authors are more fortunate, because all cultivated people are society for them; yet even

authors lose strength and agility of thought when too long deprived of a genial intellectual atmosphere. In the country you meet with cultivated individuals; but we need more than this, we need those general conversations in which every speaker is worth listening to. The life most favourable to culture would have its times of open and equal intercourse with the best minds, and also its periods of retreat. My ideal would be a house in London, not far from one or two houses that are so full of light and warmth that it is a liberal education to have entered them, and a solitary tower on some island of the Hebrides, with no companions but the sea-gulls and the thundering surges of the Atlantic. One such island I know well, and it is before my mind's eye, clear as a picture, whilst I am writing. It stands in the very entrance of a fine salt-water loch, rising above two hundred feet out of the water and setting its granite front steep against the western ocean. When the evenings are clear you can see Staffa and Iona like blue clouds between you and the sunset; and on your left, close at hand, the granite hills of Mull, with Ulva to the right across the narrow strait. It was the dream of my youth to build a tower there, with three or four little rooms in it, and walls as strong as a light-house. There have been more foolish dreams, and there have been less competent teachers than the tempests that would have roused me and the calms that would have brought me peace.



If any serious thought, if any noble inspiration might have been hoped for, surely it would have been there, where only the clouds and waves were transient, but the ocean before me, and the stars above, and the mountains on either hand, were emblems and evidences of eternity. . . .

Let me recommend certain precautions which taken together are likely to keep you safe. Care for the physical health in the first place, for if there is a morbid mind the bodily organs are not doing their work as they ought to do. Next, for the mind itself, I would heartily recommend hard study, really hard study, taken very regularly but in very moderate quantity. The effect of it on the mind is as bracing as that of cold water on the body, but as you ought not to remain too long in the cold bath, so it is dangerous to study *hard* more than a short time every day. Do some work that is very difficult (such as reading some language that you have to puzzle out à coups de dictionnaire) two hours a day regularly, to brace the fighting power of the intellect, but let the rest of the day's work be easier. Acquire especially, if you possibly can, the enviable faculty of getting entirely rid of your work in the intervals of it, and of taking a hearty interest in common things, in a garden, or stable, or dog-kennel, or farm. If the work pursues you—if what is called unconscious cerebration, which ought to go forward without your knowing it, becomes conscious cerebration, and bothers you, then you have

been working beyond your cerebral strength and you are not safe.

An organization which was intended by Nature for the intellectual life cannot be healthy and happy without a certain degree of intellectual activity. Natures like those of Humboldt and Goethe need immense labours for their own felicity, smaller powers need less extensive labour. To all of us who have intellectual needs there is a certain supply of work necessary to perfect health. If we do less, we are in danger of that *ennui* which comes from want of intellectual exercise; if we do more, we may suffer from that other *ennui* which is due to the weariness of the jaded faculties, and this is the more terrible of the two. . . .

The reading practised by most people, by all who do not set before themselves intellectual culture as one of the definite aims of life, is remarkable for the regularity with which it neglects all the great authors of the past. The books provided by the circulating library, the reviews and magazines, the daily newspapers, are read whilst they are novelties, but the standard authors are left on their shelves unopened. We require a firm resolution to resist this invasion of what is new, because it flows like an unceasing river, and unless we protect our time against it by some solid embankment of unshakable rule and resolution, every nook and cranny of it will be filled and flooded. An Englishman whose

life was devoted to culture, but who lived in an out-of-the-way place on the Continent, told me that he considered it a decided advantage to his mind to live quite outside of the English library system, because if he wanted to read a new book he had to buy it and pay heavily for carriage besides, which made him very careful in his choice. For the same reason he rejoiced that the nearest English news-room was two hundred miles from his residence. . . .

For literary men there is nothing so valuable as a window with a cheerful and beautiful prospect. It is good for us to have this refreshment for the eye when we leave off working, and Montaigne\* did wisely to have his study up in a tower from which he had extensive views. There is a well-known objection to extensive views as wanting in snugness and comfort, but this objection scarcely applies to the especial case of literary men. What we want is not so much snugness as relief, refreshment, suggestion, and we get these, as a general rule, much better from wide prospects than from limited ones. I have just alluded to Montaigne,—will you permit me to imitate that dear old philosopher in his egotism and describe to you the view from the room I write in, which cheers and amuses me continually? But before describing this, let me describe another of

\* The reader will find Montaigne's description of his study at page 10 of this volume.

which the recollection is very dear to me and as vivid as a freshly-painted picture. In years gone by, I had only to look up from my desk and see a noble loch in its inexhaustible loveliness, and a mountain in its majesty. It was a daily and hourly delight to watch the breezes play about the enchanted isles, on the delicate silvery surface, dimming some clear reflection, or trailing it out in length, or cutting sharply across it with acres of rippling blue. It was a frequent pleasure to see the clouds play about the crest of Cruachan and Ben Vorich's golden head, grey mists that crept upwards from the valleys till the sunshine suddenly caught them and made them brighter than the snows they shaded. And the leagues and leagues of heather on the lower land to the southward that became like the aniline dyes of deepest purple and blue, when the sky was grey in the evening—all save one orange-streak! Ah, those were spectacles never to be forgotten, splendours of light and glory, and sadness of deepening gloom when the eyes grew moist in the twilight and secretly drank their tears.—“The Intellectual Life.”

FRANCES R. HAVERGAL. 1836—1879.

Only a word of command, but  
It loses or wins the field;  
Only a stroke of the pen, but a  
Heart is broken or healed.

MARY C. WARE (AMERICAN WRITER).

There is nothing in the recollections of my childhood that I look back upon with so much pleasure as the reading aloud my books to my mother. She was then a woman of many cares, and in the habit of engaging in every variety of household work. Whatever she might be doing in kitchen, or dairy, or parlour, she was always ready to listen to me, and to explain whatever I did not understand. There was always with her an undercurrent of thought about other things, mingling with all her domestic duties, lightening and modifying them, but never leading her to neglect them, or to perform them imperfectly. I believe it is to this trait of her character that she owes the elasticity and ready social sympathy that still animates her under the weight of almost four-score years.

BOSTON LITERARY WORLD.

A great art in reading, then, one which should be inculcated in theory, and in the practice of which the oldest and wisest of us should constantly be drilling ourselves, is this art of so carrying the mind along the paths of another's thought that it shall retain only the good and the true and the beautiful, while the bad and the false and the repulsive shall instantly pass out of sight and recollection. Only as we are masters of this art are we safe in the midst

of the perils to which reading exposes us; and in this art, which may be settled by practice into a habit, our youth particularly should be zealously educated.

PROFESSOR W. P. ATKINSON  
(AMERICAN). [Living.]

The most important question for the good student and reader is not, amidst this multitude of books which no man can number, how much he shall read. The really important questions are, first, what is the quality of what he does read; and, second, what is his manner of reading it. There is an analogy which is more than accidental between physical and mental assimilation and digestion; and, homely as the illustration may seem, it is the most forcible I can use. Let two sit down to a table spread with food: one possessed of a healthy appetite, and knowing something of the nutritious qualities of the various dishes before him; the other cursed with a pampered and capricious appetite, and knowing nothing of the results of chemical and physiological investigation. One shall make a better meal, and go away stronger and better fed, on a dish of oat-meal, than the other on a dinner that has half emptied his pockets. Shall we study physiological chemistry and know all about what is food for the body, and neglect mental chemistry, and be utterly careless as to what nutriment is contained in the food

we give our minds? I am not speaking here of vicious literature: we don't spread our tables with poisons. I speak only of the varying amount of *nutritive matter* contained in books.

Who can over-estimate the value of good books, those ships of thought, as Bacon so finely calls them, voyaging through the sea of time, and carrying their precious freight so safely from generation to generation! Here are the finest minds giving us the best wisdom of present and all past ages; here are intellects gifted far beyond ours, ready to give us the results of lifetimes of patient thought; imaginations open to the beauty of the universe, far beyond what it is given us to behold; characters whom we can only vainly hope to imitate, but whom it is one of the highest privileges of life to know. Here they all are; and to learn to know them is the privilege of the educated man.

REV. R. H. QUICK. [Living.]

The lion's share of our time and thoughts and interests must be given to our business or profession, whatever that may be; and in few instances is this connected with literature. For the rest, whatever time or thought a man can spare from his calling is mostly given to his family, or to society, or to some hobby which is not literature. And love of literature is not seen in such reading as is common. The literary

spirit shows itself, as I said, in appreciating beauty of expression; and how far beauty of expression is cared for we may estimate from the fact that few people think of reading anything a second time. The ordinary reader is profoundly indifferent about style, and will not take the trouble to understand ideas. He keeps to periodicals or light fiction, which enables the mind to loll in its easy chair (so to speak), and see pass before it a series of pleasing images.

WILLIAM BLADES. [Living.]

I do not envy any man that absence of sentiment which makes some people careless of the memorials of their ancestors, and whose blood can be warmed up only by talking of horses or the price of hops. To them solitude means *ennui*, and anybody's company is preferable to their own. What an immense amount of calm enjoyment and mental renovation do such men miss. Even a millionaire will ease his toils, lengthen his life, and add a hundred per cent. to his daily pleasures if he becomes a bibliophile; while to the man of business with a taste for books, who through the day has struggled in the battle of life with all its irritating rebuffs and anxieties, what a blessed season of pleasurable repose opens upon him as he enters his sanctum, where every article wafts to him a welcome, and every book is a personal friend.—“The Enemies of Books.”



WILLIAM FREELAND. [Living.]

Give me a nook and a book,  
And let the proud world spin round :  
Let it scramble by hook or by crook  
For wealth or a name with a sound.  
You are welcome to amble your ways,  
Aspirers to place or to glory ;  
May big bells jangle your praise,  
And golden pens blazon your story !  
For me, let me dwell in my nook,  
Here, by the curve of this brook,  
That croons to the tune of my book,  
Whose melody wafts me for ever  
On the waves of an unseen river.

Give me a book and a nook  
Far away from the glitter and strife ;  
Give me a staff and a crook,  
The calm and the sweetness of life :  
Let me pause—let me brood as I list,  
On the marvels of heaven's own spinning,—  
Sunlight and moonlight and mist,  
Glorious without slaying or sinning.  
Vain world, let me reign in my nook,  
King of this kingdom, my book,  
A region by fashion forsook :  
Pass on, ye lean gamblers for glory,  
Nor mar the sweet tune of my story !

“A Birth Song and other Poems,” 1882.

WHIPPLE (AMERICAN CRITIC). [Living.]

Books—lighthouses erected in the sea of  
time.

WILLIAM E. A. AXON.

b. 1844. [Living.]

To students and lovers of books, the word library possesses a charm which scarcely any other can claim; and there are few associations so pleasant as those excited by it. To them it means a place where one may withdraw from the hurry and bustle of every-day life, from the cares of commerce and the strife of politics, and hold communion with the saints and heroes of the past; a place where the good and true men of bygone ages, being dead, yet speak, and reprove the vanity and littleness of our lives, where they may excite us to noble deeds, may cheer and console us in defeat, may teach us magnanimity in victory. There we may trace the history of nations now no more; and in their follies and vices, in their virtues, in their grand heroic deeds, we may see that "increasing purpose" which "runs through all the ages," and learn how the "thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns." There we may listen to "the fairy tales of science," or to the voices of the poets singing their undying songs.

Every man should have a library. The works of the grandest masters of literature may now be procured at prices that place them within the reach almost of the very poorest, and we may all put Parnassian singing birds into our chambers to cheer us with the sweetness of their songs. And

when we have got our little library we may look proudly at Shakspeare, and Bacon, and Bunyan, as they stand in our bookcase in company with other noble spirits, and one or two of whom the world knows nothing, but whose worth we have often tested. These may cheer and enlighten us, may inspire us with higher aims and aspirations, may make us, if we use them rightly, wiser and better men.

Ignorance is a prolific mother of vice and crime, and whatever tends to destroy ignorance aims a blow also at the existence of crime. Let us rejoice then at the success of these new-born institutions, whence the blessed light of knowledge is diffused into the darkness. "The true university of these days is a collection of books," says Carlyle, and in a great library what noble teachers we may choose! The best and wisest of all ages are there to give aid and direction, counsel and consolation. Surely a people who make bosom friends of the wise and good will become better men than they were before, by reason of that companionship. The spoken word as an instrument of education is now becoming of minor importance, and the printed voice is taking its place, chief engine in the dissemination of thought. "An intelligent class can scarcely ever be, as a class, vicious," says Everett. Those who have tasted the sweets of intellectual pleasures will hardly care to descend to lower and grosser forms of enjoyment, and a people familiar with those lessons of

•

wisdom and truth taught by the mighty dead, can hardly fail to be a nation wise, and just, and true.—“Article on Free Public Libraries, in ‘*Meliora*,’ Oct., 1867.”

THE REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE  
(AMERICAN DIVINE). [Living.]

Let us thank God for books. When I consider what some books have done for the world, and what they are doing, how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, soothe pain, give an ideal life to those whose homes are hard and cold, bind together distant ages and foreignlands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truths from heaven—I give eternal blessings for this gift, and pray that we may use it aright, and abuse it not.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. [Living.]

Every book is, in an intimate sense, a circular-letter to the friends of him who writes it.

CHARLES F. RICHARDSON. [Living.]

With young or old, there is no such helper towards the reading habit as the cultivation of this warm and undying feeling of the *friendliness* of books. If a parent, or a teacher, or a book, seems but a taskmaster; if their rules are those of a statute-book

and their society like that of an officer of the law, there is small hope that their help can be made either serviceable or profitable. But with the growth of the *friendly* feeling comes a state of mind which renders all things possible. When one book has become a friend and fellow, the world has grown that much broader and more beautiful. Petrarch said of his books, considered as his friends: "I have friends, whose society is extremely agreeable to me; they are of all ages, and of every country. They have distinguished themselves both in the cabinet and in the field, and obtained high honours for their knowledge of the sciences. It is easy to gain access to them, for they are always at my service, and I admit them to my company, and dismiss them from it, whenever I please. They are never troublesome, but immediately answer every question I ask them. Some relate to me the events of the past ages, while others reveal to me the secrets of nature. Some teach me how to live, and others how to die. Some, by their vivacity, drive away my cares and exhilarate my spirits, while others give fortitude to my mind, and teach me the important lesson how to restrain my desires, and to depend wholly on myself. They open to me, in short, the various avenues of all the arts and sciences, and upon their information I safely rely in all emergencies." . . .

The great secret of reading consists in this, that it does not matter so much what

we read, or how we read it, as what we think and how we think it. Reading is only the fuel; and, the mind once on fire, any and all material will feed the flame, provided only it have any combustible matter in it. And we cannot tell from what quarter the next material will come. The thought we need, the facts we are in search of, may make their appearance in the corner of the newspaper, or in some forgotten volume long ago consigned to dust and oblivion. Hawthorne, in the parlour of a country inn, on a rainy day, could find mental nutriment in an old directory. That accomplished philologist, the late Lord Strangford, could find ample amusement for an hour's delay at a railway-station in tracing out the etymology of the names in Bradshaw. The mind that is not awake and alive will find a library a barren wilderness. Now, gather up the scraps and fragments of thought on whatever subject you may be studying,—for of course by a note-book I do not mean a mere receptacle for odds and ends, a literary dust-bin,—but acquire the habit of gathering everything whenever and wherever you find it, that belongs in your line or lines of study, and you will be surprised to see how such fragments will arrange themselves into an orderly whole by the very organizing power of your own thinking, acting in a definite direction. This is a true process of self-education; but you see it is no mechanical process of mere aggregation. It requires activity of thought,—but without

that, what is any reading but mere passive amusement? And it requires method. I have myself a sort of literary book-keeping. I keep a day-book, and at my leisure I post my literary accounts, bringing together in proper groups the fruits of much casual reading. . . .

A book that is worth reading all through, is pretty sure to make its worth known. There is something in the literary conscience which tells a reader whether he is wasting his time or not. An hour or a minute may be sufficient opportunity for forming a decision concerning the worth or worthlessness of the book. If it is utterly bad and valueless, then skip the whole of it, as soon as you have made the discovery. If a part is good and a part bad, accept the one and reject the other. If you are in doubt, take warning at the first intimation that you are mispending your opportunity and frittering away your time over an unprofitable book. Reading that is of questionable value is not hard to find out; it bears its notes and marks in unmistakable plainness, and it puts forth, all unwittingly, danger-signals of which the reader should take heed.

The art of skipping is, in a word, the art of noting and shunning that which is bad, or frivolous, or misleading, or unsuitable for one's individual needs. If you are convinced that the book or the chapter is bad, you cannot drop it too quickly. If it is simply idle and foolish, put it away on that account, — unless you are properly

seeking amusement from idleness and frivolity. If it is deceitful and disingenuous, your task is not so easy, but your conscience will give you warning, and the sharp examination which should follow, will tell you that you are in poor literary company.

But there are a great many books which are good in themselves, and yet are not good at all times or for all readers. No book, indeed, is of universal value and appropriateness. As has been said in previous chapters of this series, the individual must always dare to remember that he has his own legitimate tastes and wants, and that it is not only proper to follow them, but highly improper to permit them to be overruled by the tastes and wants of others. It is right for one to neglect entirely, or to skip through, pages which another should study again and again. Let each reader ask himself: Why am I reading this? What service will it be to me? Am I neglecting something else that would be more beneficial? Here, as in every other question involved in the choice of books, the golden key to knowledge, a key that will only fit its own proper doors, is *purpose*. . . .

Admitting thus the utility of the reading of periodicals, and even insisting upon the necessity and duty of reading them, it must nevertheless be said in the plainest manner that an alarming amount of time is wasted over them, or worse than wasted. When we have determined that newspapers and maga-



zines ought to be read, let us by no means flatter ourselves that all our reading of them is commendable or justifiable. I am quite safe in saying that the individual who happens to be reading these lines wastes more than half the time that he devotes to periodicals; and that he wastes it because he does not regulate that time as he ought. "To learn to choose what is valuable and to skip the rest" is a good rule for reading periodicals; and it is a rule whose observance will reduce, by fully one half, the time devoted to them, and will save time and strength for better intellectual employments,—to say nothing of the very important fact that discipline in this line will prevent the reader from falling into that demoralising and altogether disgraceful inability to hold the mind upon any continuous subject of thought or study, which is pretty sure to follow in the train of undue or thoughtless reading of periodicals. And when, as too often happens, a man comes to read nothing save his morning paper at breakfast or on the train, and his evening paper after his day's work is over, that man's brain, so far as reading is concerned, is only half alive. It cannot carry on a long train of thought or study; it notes superficial things rather than inner principles; it seeks to be amused or stimulated, rather than to be instructed. —"The Choice of Books." (By permission of Messrs. Sampson Low, Marston, & Co. London.)

## DR. CHAPIN (AMERICAN PREACHER).

"If the riches of both Indies," said Fenelon, "if the crowns of all the kingdoms of Europe, were laid at my feet, in exchange for my love of reading, I would spurn them all." This will find an echo in the hearts of many whose toil that love has lightened, whose grief it has soothed, whose loneliness it has cheered, and who have found that there is a virtue in well-chosen books which proves an antidote for a thousand ills. Did we live in days of feudal darkness, when books were rare and found only in the Gothic niches of the wealthy, or in richly-endowed libraries—in the days when the illuminated manuscript was chained to a pillar, like some costly jewel—did we live in such days, we might not wonder that a fondness for reading was rare also, and that the mind sought for employment and relaxation in other pursuits. But living in this age and country I cannot but marvel, that any young man should have a disrelish, or neglect to cultivate a taste, for books. Books!—the chosen depositories of the thoughts, the opinions and the aspirations of mighty intellects;—like wondrous mirrors that have caught and fixed bright images of souls that have passed away;—like magic lyres, whose masters have bequeathed them to the world, and which yet, of themselves, ring with unforgotten music, while the hands that touched their chords have crumbled into dust.—"Duties of Young Men."

H. W. LONGFELLOW. 1807—1882.

[Just as the final sheet of this collection was being prepared for the press, the following lines were wafted hither from the other side of the Atlantic—enabling the compiler to finish his pleasant task with a singularly touching sonnet from the pen of a poet whose works will always be cherished wherever sweetness, purity, tenderness, and simplicity are loved and held in honour.]

*My Books.*

Sadly as some old mediæval knight  
Gazed at the arms he could no longer  
wield,  
The sword two-handed and the shining  
shield  
Suspended in the hall, and full in sight,  
While secret longings for the lost delight  
Of tourney or adventure in the field  
Came over him, and tears but half concealed  
Trembled and fell upon his beard of  
white,  
So I behold these books upon their shelf,  
My ornaments and arms of other days ;  
Not wholly useless, though no longer used,  
For they remind me of my other self,  
Younger and stronger, and the pleasant  
ways,  
In which I walked, now clouded and  
confused.

December, 1881.



APPENDIX.



## WILLIAM HAZLITT

AS ESSAYIST AND CRITIC.

The compiler, in pursuance of the note appended to the extracts from William Hazlitt at page 89, begs to call attention to an essayist and critic whose writings ought to be better known by readers of the present day. Hazlitt's works deserve to hold a conspicuous place in the literature of the earlier part of the present century. They abound in acute and eloquent opinions regarding literature, art, and life. No critic so thoroughly imparts to his readers the sense of his own enjoyment of genius, as well as reveals the process of it with such marvellous success. His judgments are sometimes warped by personal and political prejudices; but, with all their drawbacks, there are none superior to his in vigour, raciness, and general truthfulness. He infused an entirely new spirit into the criticism of his day. His appreciation of literature and art was more earnest, suggestive, and discriminating than that of any critic of his time, while his style was calculated to rivet attention by its remarkable force, its warmth and richness of colouring, and epigrammatic brilliancy. His knowledge of the drama, the fine arts, works of fancy and fiction,

and other departments of polite literature, taken severally, may not equal that of some other persons; but, taken altogether, is certainly unrivalled. His writings are full of spirit and vivacity, and there is, at the same time, an intensity in his conception which embodies ideas that are so volatile and fugitive as to escape the grasp of a slower but profounder intellect. He professes to throw aside the formality and prudery of authorship, and to give his best thoughts to the world with the freedom and frankness of old Montaigne, without submitting to assume the mask of current opinions or conventional usage. He has sensibility, imagination, great acuteness of intellect, and singular powers of expression. His beauties are procured by a great expenditure of thinking; and some of his single strokes and flashes reveal more to the reader's understanding than whole pages of an ordinary writer. His fierce and passionate political partisanship and uncompromising honesty of speech were the main causes why his powers as an essayist and critic of literature and art were not so universally recognised as they deserved. He made many enemies, and was the object of the grossest and most profligate attacks on the part of his political opponents. The effect of this has been that now, more than fifty years after his death, justice has not been done to this acute and vigorous thinker.



Lord Lytton (Bulwer), writing on Hazlitt in 1836, says:—

“He had a keen sense of the Beautiful and the Subtile; and what is more, he was deeply imbued with sympathy for the humane. He ranks high amongst the social writers—his intuitive feeling was in favour of the multitude; yet he had nothing of the demagogue or *litterateur*; he did not pander to a single vulgar passion. When he died, he left no successor. Others may equal him, but none resemble. . . . To the next age, he will stand among the foremost of the *thinkers* of the present; and late and tardy retribution will assuredly be his—a retribution which, long after the envy he provoked is dumb, and the errors he committed are forgotten—will invest with interest anything associated with his name—making it an honour even to have been his contemporary.”

The same critic, thirty years later, in an article on “Charles Lamb, and Some of His Companions,” in the “Quarterly Review,” Jan., 1867, again writes of Hazlitt, and delivers this mature judgment of him:—

“But amidst all these intolerant prejudices and this wild extravagance of apparent hate, there are in Hazlitt from time to time—those times not unfrequent—outbursts of sentiment scarcely surpassed among the writers of our century for tender sweetness, rapid perceptions of truth and beauty in regions of criticism then but sparingly cultured—nay, scarcely discovered—and massive

fragments of such composition as no hand of ordinary strength could hew out of the unransacked mines of our native language. . . . It is not as a guide that Hazlitt can be useful to any man. His merit is that of a companion in districts little trodden—a companion strong and hardy, who keeps our sinews in healthful strain; rough and irascible, whose temper will constantly offend us if we do not steadily preserve our own; but always animated, vivacious, brilliant in his talk; suggestive of truths, even where insisting on paradoxes; and of whom when we part company we retain impressions stamped with the crown-mark of indisputable genius. Gladly would we welcome among the choicer prose works of our age some volumes devoted to the more felicitous specimens of Hazlitt's genius. He needs but an abstract of his title deeds to secure a fair allotment in the ground, already overcrowded, which has been quaintly described by a Scandinavian poet as the garden-land lying south between Walhalla and the sea."

Many cordial recognitions of Hazlitt as an essayist and critic might be given from the pens of some of our most competent literary judges, including Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Talfourd, Miss Martineau, Sir J. Mackintosh, Jeffrey, Gilfillan, and others. A few selections only from these judgments can here find a place.

Sir James Mackintosh says of Hazlitt:—

“He is a very original thinker, and, notwithstanding some irregularities which appear to us faults, a very powerful writer. I say this, though I know he is no panegyrist of men.”

Judge Talfourd says of his essays:—

“The excellence of his essays on characters and books differs not so much in degree as in kind from that of all others of their class. There is a weight and substance about them, which makes us feel that, amidst this nice and dexterous analysis, they are, in no small measure, creations. The quantity of thought which is accumulated upon his favourite subjects, the variety and richness of the illustrations, and the strong sense of beauty and pleasure which pervades and animates the composition, give them a place, if not above, yet apart from the writings of all other essayists.”

His friend Leigh Hunt thus spoke of him in a notice written at the time of his death:—

“He was one of the profoundest writers of the day, an admirable reasoner (no one got better or sooner at the heart of a question than he did), the best general critic, the greatest critic on art that ever appeared (his writings on that subject cast a light like a painted window), exquisite in his relish of poetry, an untarnished lover of liberty, and with all his humour and irritability (of which no man had more) a sincere friend

and a generous enemy. . . . Posterity will do justice to the man that wrote for truth and mankind."

Lord Jeffrey, in an article in the "Edinburgh Review," thus characterises Hazlitt:—

"He possesses one noble quality at least for the office which he has chosen, in the intense admiration and love which he feels for the great authors on whose excellences he chiefly dwells. His relish for their beauties is so keen that while he describes them, the pleasures which they impart become almost palpable to the sense. . . . He introduces us almost corporeally into the divine presence of the Great of old time. . . . His intense admiration of intellectual beauty seems always to sharpen his critical faculties. He perceives it by a kind of intuitive fervour, how deeply soever it may be buried in rubbish; and separates it in a moment from all that would encumber or deface it. . . . In a word he at once analyses and describes—so that our enjoyments of loveliness are not chilled, but brightened, by our acquaintance with their inward sources. The knowledge communicated in his lectures breaks no sweet enchantment, nor chills one feeling of youthful joy. His criticisms, while they extend our insight into the causes of poetical excellence, teach us, at the same time, more keenly to enjoy, and more fondly to revere it." .

John Scott, the editor of the "London Magazine," an acute writer, thus sums up Hazlitt's claims as a literary critic:—

"His manner of commenting on the great writers is precisely that which Gibbon described as the best of all others—most worthy of the memory of departed genius, and giving the most undoubted testimony to the sincerity with which it is adorned. He catches the mantles of those whose celestial flights he regards with devout but undazzled eye. He lives in their time, becomes animated with their feelings, and conveys to us their spirit, in its unrivalled freshness and unquenched fire. Nothing that is common-place or unmeaning—none of the expletives of criticism—enter into his discourses; he never 'bandies idle words;' the source of true beauty, the soul of poetical life, the hidden charm, the essential principle of power and efficacy, the original feature, the distinguishing property—to these his sagacity and taste are drawn, as it were, by instinct, and with these only he meddles in his expositions."

Miss Martineau's opinion of Hazlitt as a critic and essayist is equally emphatic:—

"In Hazlitt, we lost the prince of critics; and after he was gone, there were many who could never look at a fiction, or see a tragedy, or ponder a point of morals, or take a survey of any public character, without a melancholy sense of loss in Hazlitt's absence and silence. There can scarcely

be a stronger gratification of the critical faculties than in reading Hazlitt's essays. . . . As an essayist, he had rivals; as a critical essayist, he had none."

Sir Archibald Alison, who disliked Hazlitt's political opinions, says of him:—

"In critical disquisitions on the leading characters and works of the drama, he is not surpassed in the whole range of English literature."

George Gilfillan, in his "Gallery of Literary Portraits," devotes a chapter to Hazlitt. He says:—

"Hazlitt, as a man, had errors of no little magnitude; but he was as sincere and honest a being as ever breathed. . . . His works abound in gems, as sparkling as they are precious, and ever and anon a 'mountain of light' lifts up its shining head. Not only are they full of profound critical *dicta*, but of the sharpest observations upon life and manners, upon history, and the metaphysics of the human mind. Descriptions of nature, too, are there, cool, clear, and refreshing as summer leaves. And then how fine are his panegyrics on the old masters and the old poets! And ever and anon he floats away into long glorious passages, such as that on Wordsworth and that on Coleridge, in the 'Spirit of the Age'—such as his description of the effects of the Reformation—such as his panegyric on poetry—his character of Sir Thomas

.

Browne—and his picture of the Reign of Terror! Few things in the language are greater than these. They resemble

‘The long-resounding march and energy  
divine’

of the ancient lords of English prose—the Drydens, the Brownes, the Jeremy Taylors, and the Miltons. . . .

A subtle thinker, an eloquent writer, a lover of beauty and poetry, and man, and truth, one of the best of critics, and not the worst of men, expired in William Hazlitt.”

Ebenezer Elliott, the vigorous “Anti-Corn Law Rhymer,” said to a friend who visited him:—

“The reading of Hazlitt was an epoch to me; I advise you to study him.”

Miss Mitford, in a letter to Sir William Elford, thus speaks of Hazlitt:—

“By the way, I never hear you talk of Hazlitt. Did you never read any of his works? Never read ‘The Round Table?’ ‘The Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays?’ ‘The Lectures on English Poetry?’ or the ‘Lectures on the English Comic Writers?’ The ‘Quarterly Reviewers’ give him a bad character, but that merely regards politics, and politics ought not to weigh in works of general literature. I am sure you would like them; they are so exquisitely entertaining, so original, so free from every sort of critical shackle—the style is so delight-

fully *piquant*, so sparkling, so glittering, so tasteful, so condensed; the images and illustrations come in such rich and graceful profusion that one seems like Aladdin in the magic garden, where the leaves were emeralds, the flowers sapphires, and the fruits topazes and rubies. Do read some of the lectures. You will not agree with half Mr. Hazlitt's opinions, neither do I, but you will be very much entertained. Every now and then two or three pages together are really like a series of epigrams, particularly in the 'Lectures on the Living Poets.' There is a character of your friend Mr. Wordsworth which will enchant you."

Alexander Smith, the author of "Dreamthorp," a critic and essayist of no mean qualifications, says:—

"Hazlitt, if he lacked Lamb's quaintness and ethereal humour, and Hunt's powerfulness, possessed a robust and passionate faculty, which gave him a distinct place in the literature of his time. His feelings were keen and deep. He had a decided metaphysical turn; he was an acute critic in poetry and art, but he wrote too much, and he wrote too hurriedly. When at his best, his style is excellent, concise, vigorous;—laying open the stubborn thought as the sharp ploughshare the glebe. . . . His best essays are, in a sense, autobiographical, because in them he recalls his enthusiasms, and the passionate hopes on which he fed his spirit. . . . Some of his essays



contain passages which any man might be proud to have written."

Mr. Richard Garnett, a high authority as a literary critic, in the article "William Hazlitt," in the new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," thus deals with this writer:—

"Next to Coleridge, Hazlitt was perhaps the most powerful exponent of the dawning perception that Shakespeare's art was no less marvellous than his genius; and Hazlitt's criticism did not, like Coleridge's, remain in the condition of a series of brilliant but fitful glimpses of insight, but was elaborated with steady care. His lectures on the Elizabethan dramatists performed a similar service for the earlier, sweeter, and simpler among them, such as Dekker . . . while his criticisms on the English comic writers and men of letters in general are masterpieces of ingenious and felicitous exposition, though rarely, like Coleridge's, penetrating to the inmost core of the subject. As an essayist Hazlitt is even more effective than as a critic. For this style of composition allows more scope to the striking individuality of his character. Being enabled to select his own subjects, he escapes dependence upon others either for his matter or his illustrations, and presents himself by turns as a metaphysician, a moralist, a humorist, a painter of manners and characteristics, but always, whatever his ostensible

theme, deriving the essence of his commentary from his own bosom. This combination of intense subjectivity with strict adherence to his subject is one of Hazlitt's most distinctive and creditable traits. Intellectual truthfulness is a passion with him. He steeps his topic in the hues of his own individuality, but never uses it as a means of self-display. . . .

With many serious defects both on the intellectual and the moral side, Hazlitt's character in both had at least the merit of sincerity and consistency. He was a compound of intellect and passion, and the refinement of his critical analysis is associated with vehement eloquence and glowing imagery. He was essentially a critic, a dissector, and, as Bulwer justly remarks, a much better judge of men of thought than of men of action. But he also possessed many gifts in no way essential to the critical character, and transcending the critic's ordinary sphere. These, while giving him rank as an independent writer, frequently perturbed the natural clearness of his critical judgment and seduced him into the paradoxes with which his works abound. These paradoxes, however, never spring from affectation; they are in general the sallies of a mind so agile and ardent as to overrun its own goal. His style is perfectly natural, and yet admirably calculated for effect. His diction, always rich and masculine, seems to kindle as he proceeds; and when thoroughly animated by his subject,

he advances with a succession of energetic, hard-hitting sentences, each carrying his argument a step further, like a champion dealing out blows as he presses upon the enemy."

This array of testimonies, which might readily be extended to a much greater length, cannot be more fitly closed than in the following touching words of Charles Lamb, Hazlitt's warm friend and admirer. They occur in his celebrated letter to Southey:—

"Protesting against much he has written, and some things which he chooses to do; judging him by his conversation, which I enjoyed so long, and relished so deeply; or by his books, in those places where no clouding passion intervenes, I should belie my own conscience, if I said less, than that I think W. H. to be, in his natural and healthy state, one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing. So far from being ashamed of that intimacy, which was betwixt us, it is my boast that I was able for so many years to have preserved it entire, and I think I shall go to my grave without finding, or expecting to find, such another companion."

---

The compiler would scarcely, perhaps, have considered it necessary to say so much about Hazlitt, had it not been for an ill-considered and rash estimate of him by Mrs. Oliphant, in her "Literary History of

England" (1790—1825), 3 vols., lately published, a book which, from the reputation of its author, is likely to become one of considerable authority on the period of our literature to which it refers. Her estimate of this remarkable writer is entirely wanting in that discrimination and appreciation which characterise her judgments regarding other authors, such as Cowper, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Jane Austen, &c. It is only charitable to suppose that Mrs. Oliphant is but slightly acquainted with Hazlitt's works. Even the most superficial perusal of one or two of his best volumes would hardly have warranted such an inept criticism as this—"*His books are already as old as if they had been written a thousand years ago, instead of half-a-hundred.*" An able critic in the "Spectator," reviewing Mrs. Oliphant's book, thus protests against her estimate of Hazlitt:—

"This, so far as we can judge, is simply erroneous. We should say that Hazlitt is still widely read, and that there is little better reading. Charming as Lamb is, there is far less to be learned from him of the life of his day than there is from the gloomy and dyspeptic Hazlitt. Violent and unjust as were his prejudices, he had one of the shrewdest eyes of his generation, and his papers on 'My First Acquaintance with Poets,' for instance, give us more knowledge of Coleridge and Wordsworth, than we can

get from any other source. As a critic, too, he cannot help discerning genius where genius is, and brings home to us with marvellous force exactly in what it consisted. In fact, we know no essays of the early part of the present century to compare with Hazlitt's for shrewdness, force, and a certain accurate, if decidedly malevolent, incisiveness. Among the caprices of Mrs. Oliphant's judgment, we find none odder than her notion of the obsolescence of Hazlitt: We should call him by far the most modern of that group of writers to which he belonged." Another of Mrs. Oliphant's critics refers to her judgment of Hazlitt in these words:—

"It may be questioned if a more foolish bit of literary criticism was ever penned."

---

In conclusion, the reader will, no doubt, attach more weight to the deliberate and carefully-formed opinions of the able critics quoted in this article, than to a hasty judgment, pronounced by an otherwise deservedly popular writer—although in this special case she has made a grievous literary mistake. Let the reader go to Hazlitt's works themselves, and he will find in them a store of instruction, delight, and invigoration, as well as a remarkable power of inspiring enthusiasm for genius, and of stimulating intellectual sympathy. He will never be perplexed by ideas imperfectly

grasped, by thoughts which the writer cannot fully express. He will become acquainted with a writer of rare incisiveness, and almost unerring literary judgment—"whose manner" (to use the words of Mr. Cotter Morison in his admirable monograph on Macaulay, and which are equally applicable to Hazlitt) "is straightforward and frank, and therefore winning, and who communicates the interest he feels—an adept in the art of putting himself *en rapport* with his reader—whose thought is always well within his reach, and is unfolded with complete mastery and ease to its uttermost filament."

---

It may be mentioned that a selection of Hazlitt's works has been published by Messrs. Bell & Sons, in six volumes, at a very moderate price. These contain a reprint of fourteen of his best volumes, viz.:—"Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth," "Characters of Shakespeare's Plays," "Lectures on the English Poets," "Lectures on the English Comic Writers," "Table-Talk; Essays on Men and Manners" (2 vols.), "The Plain Speaker; Opinions on Books, Men, and Things" (2 vols.), "The Round Table; Essays on Literature, &c." (2 vols.), "Characteristics in the manner of Rochefoucauld's Maxims," "Sketches and Essays," "Winterslow; Essays and Characters written

there," and "Conversations of James Northcote, R.A." Of this volume it was said that "All the ill-nature in the book is Northcote's; and all, or almost all, the talent Hazlitt's." Messrs. Reeves & Turner have issued a volume of Hazlitt's numerous papers on the Fine Arts, not given in the above series, including his treatise on that subject contributed to "The Encyclopædia Britannica." This treatise is the only work of Hazlitt's ever noticed by the "Quarterly Review." It says of this Essay: "We have read no work of this author with anything approaching to the same gratification. . . . The whole subject of the treatise is to show that the perfection attained by all the great masters arose from the study of the nature which surrounded them, and not from that imagined improvement upon nature which has been called the *ideal*."

In addition to the works above enumerated, Hazlitt wrote between twenty and thirty volumes on other subjects, including a metaphysical essay, political essays and sketches of political characters, notes of a journey through France and Italy, including observations on the fine arts, a score of reviews in the "Edinburgh Review," criticisms on the stage, portraits of distinguished literary contemporaries, a life of Napoleon (one-sided, but extremely brilliant), and other biographies, and a remarkable but regretted self-revelation, called "Liber

Amoris." This book has been the subject of many articles and much curious criticism. De Quincey called it "an explosion of frenzy." It has been characterised by other critics as "a novelty in the English language;" "cannot be read without amazed and painful pity;" "an eclipse of the rational faculty;" "takes a flight equal to anything that poetry or fiction has left us," &c., &c. Lord Houghton speaks of it as "that curious adventure which Hazlitt has embalmed in that delightful book, the 'Liber Amoris.'"

Of Hazlitt's *Life of Napoleon*, which extended to four volumes, Albany Fonblanque, the foremost journalist of his day, said: "We will venture to assert that this work displays a deeper insight into the sources and principles of morals and politics, in brief, rapid, and lightning glances—often as it were *en passant*—than nine out of ten of the formal treatises which are regarded as profound authority. . . . The narrative is rapid, spontaneous, and abounding with the mental touches which so peculiarly distinguish this writer."

A. I.



## LEIGH HUNT,

### HIS GENIUS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

At page 109, at the conclusion of the extracts given from Leigh Hunt, the compiler refers the reader to this Appendix for testimonies to the genius of this charming writer, by distinguished Book-lovers and Book-writers. It may possibly be said that these remarks extend to too great a length. If this objection be made, the compiler's answer is that the author in question was one of the most gifted of his day, and a typical man of letters; and that his writings, owing to causes which need not here be entered into, are too little known to the present generation. He feels assured that many readers will thank him for making them acquainted with Hunt, and that he is doing some service to the cause of literature by endeavouring to rescue his works from undeserved neglect.

Leigh Hunt is an author who deserves to be better known than he is by modern readers. As a refined, accomplished, and genial critic and essayist he takes high rank. He was probably the finest *belles-lettrist* of his day. The spirit of all his essays and criticisms is eminently healthy, cheerful, and humanising. His

writings overflow with pleasant thoughts. He is one of the best teachers of that kind of contentment and gratitude which arise from a thankful recognition of those everyday joys and blessings that more or less surround us all, and to the value of which most of us are too insensible. He stimulates to a desire of generous activity those sympathies which habit and the routine of life and business too often render languid and indolent. A belief in the good and beautiful, a reliance on the ultimate successful issue of every true and honest endeavour, and a "brotherly consideration for mistake and circumstance," pervade all that he has written. He constantly asserts the claims of the natural over the conventional, and keeps a wide and catholic outlook on humanity. Cheap and simple pleasures, true taste leading to true economy, the companionship of books, the intercourse of mind with mind, the neglected blessings about our feet, and those "stray gifts of beauty and wisdom," scattered far and wide, and which disclose themselves only to the receptive soul, are the constant themes of his pen. All these, and a thousand things else, in-doors and out-of-doors, in books, in nature, in men, and in art, he talks about in a way so natural, frank, and unconventional—so marked by a pervading kindliness of feeling, and entering so heartily into our thoughts and sympathies,—that he cannot

but be placed in the foremost rank of our most genial essayists.

In all his writings, whatever may be their form, there is the same obvious endeavour towards the one end of making his readers wiser and happier, by making them more conscious of the causes of their own faults and follies, and more tolerant towards those of others, and at the same time more alive to the innumerable sources of pleasure that exist within themselves, and everywhere about them—covered, but not concealed, by the thick veil of habit and custom. "Over all subjects that come within the sphere of its operation, his genius has a commanding control. It pierces into their essences, with an eye made doubly keen by universal kindness and love, and is perpetually discovering in them, and bringing forth to the sight of others, what never can be found but through the *desire* of finding it, and what perhaps in some instances only exists through that; but which does not, therefore, the less really exist, for all the purposes of instruction and delight." One might say that Hunt teaches better than any other writer, "how to neutralise the disagreeable, and make the best of what is in our power."

It is a quality in Hunt's writings to excite a feeling something like that of personal friendship towards himself, in the breasts of readers who know nothing of him

but through his works; and this is one of the most unequivocal proofs that can be adduced of the value of those works, and the sincerity of their author. His spirit comes to us in our homes on the face of the earth, and makes us content with them; it meets us with a smile, and what is better, makes us meet others with a smile; it shows us what is good and beautiful, and teaches us to love that goodness and beauty, wherever we find them.

It may be added that Leigh Hunt was one who practised what he taught, and it may be truly said of him that his whole life was up to a very high standard. He knew much suffering, both physical and mental—suffered many cares and grievous anxieties, but his cheerful constancy, his faith “that all which we behold is full of blessings,” his imperturbable sweetness of temper, and indomitable love and forgiveness, never failed him even in the sharpest crises of his life. That life was a fine example of the impossibility of crushing the heart of a true man, be his misfortunes and hardships ever so severe. No one ever bore the rubs of fortune more bravely than he did—“bating no jot of heart or hope.” He once was beautifully spoken of by a great writer as “the grey-headed boy whose heart can never grow old,” and those who know him and his history, and who are familiar with his writings, can feel the truth of the saying.

It is in the Essay that Leigh Hunt more peculiarly "lives, and moves, and has his being." It is sometimes, under his treatment—a satire, or a sermon—an ingenious speculation on life—a chapter of precepts—an outpouring of the heart as to an intimate friend—a genial or racy criticism—a lively description of Christmas, or some other holiday season—of a hot summer's day, or a ramble in the woods—or a gossip about the poets and wits of bygone days—Cowley, Pepys, Pope, Addison, Congreve, Steele, Wycherley, Farquhar, Cibber, or Lady Wortley Montagu, or Mrs. Centlivre,—for his sympathies were more with the school of Queen Anne and her immediate predecessors, than with that of Elizabeth.

Sometimes his essay takes the form of a finger-post to the choicest regions of our elder or modern literature—a gallery of literary portraits—a chat over a bookstall—a general looking-in at the shop-windows—a ramble among historical quarters in the city or suburbs—a description of a landscape by Wilson or Gainsborough—or of a portfolio of gem-like drawings—a romantic story from real life—a classical fable with its moral—or a fanciful soliloquy. Anon he will get into a philosophical humour, and discourse "On the slow rise of the most rational opinions," and quote wise and stately sentences from Lord Bacon's Essays

or Milton's *Areopagitica*. On another occasion he comes to us when he is running over with news of the fields and the woods, and can speak of nothing but May-day, and May-poles, and the young spring-flowers. He will give a charming description of the pleasures of breakfasting in the country on a fine summer morning, with open window looking out upon a bright green lawn, with the air breathing in, fresh and balmy, the sun-light streaming through the foliage, and casting its chequering shadows upon the favourite books and pictures with which the parlour walls are adorned—upon the table, a few pansies freshly plucked, contrasting well with the snow-white cloth; and a bee humming about from cup to cup, seeking to partake of the honey which itself probably assisted to furnish.

But he can be grave and serious, as well as gay and fanciful. At another time, perhaps, when some calamity has overtaken you, and affliction lies heavy on your household, he comes in the guise of an old and tried friend of the family, with all a friend's privileges; and sits by your hearth, and suggests many a tender and solemn thought about death and immortality. His manner has more than its usual kindness; his voice sounds gravely, yet there is almost cheerfulness in its tone when he says that "the best part of what

you loved still remains, an indestructible possession—that although the visible form be taken away, yet *that* was only lent for a season, whereas the love itself is immortal, and the consciousness of it will ever abide to strengthen your faith, and soothe you amid the stir and fever of life.” Or, it may be that he speaks of “The Deaths of Little Children,” and then he almost makes you feel as if his true friend’s hand were pressing your own, as he goes on to tell you that “those who have lost an infant, are never, as it were, without an infant child—that the other children grow up to manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the changes of mortality; but this one alone is rendered an immortal child; for death has arrested it with his kindly harshness, and blessed it into an eternal image of youth and innocence.”

In the rough winter time again, “when wind and rain beat dark December,” he will tell you of “A Day by the fire” which he had not long since—with all its home comforts and accompaniments—the pleasant hour before the candles are lighted—the gazing meditatively into the fire—the kettle “whispering its faint under-song,” and the cheerful tea-table with its joyous faces, and the pleasant hours between tea-time and bed-time spent in free utterance of thought as it comes, with a little music perhaps, or the reading of some favourite passages to

stimulate the conversational powers of the circle: while every now and then the rain rattled against the windows, and the wind howled in such a way as to make everybody think of the sea and the poor sailors, and people who have to be out of doors in such weather; and, last of all—the quiet half-hour after every one had retired but himself—when all around was silent, the cares of the day gone to sleep, and the fading embers reminding him where he should be.

In this working-day world, we are all the better for such books as those of Leigh Hunt's. They are calculated to gladden modest and humble firesides, and to give a direction to the nascent tastes of young, ingenuous minds. Such books as his refine and gild for us our leisure moments, and carry us out and away from the turmoil of exacting business life. The thoughts which such books inspire are imperishable wealth. They produce actual, visible, *felt* results. Our hearts are quickened by them. They give us a new sense of the good and beautiful. If the sun be shining, they make it even brighter than it is, and if clouds and darkness be around our path, they teach us that "into each day some rain must fall, but *behind* the cloud is the sun still shining." In his own words:—

"Fancy's the wealth of wealth, the toiler's hope,  
The poor man's piecer-out; the art of nature,



Painting her landscapes twice ; the spirit of  
fact,  
As matter is the body ; the pure gift  
Of Heaven to poet and child ; the gift which  
he  
Who retains most in manhood, being a  
man  
In all things fitting else, is most a man ;  
Because he wants no human faculty,  
Nor loses one sweet taste of the sweet  
world."

Leigh Hunt's acquirements and literary performances were much more extensive and varied than is generally understood. He was not only as has been stated an essayist and critic of great originality, possessing the nicest observation of men and manners, and gifted with an exquisite power of appreciating the subtlest beauties of literature and art—a poet of much tenderness, as well as of delicate and vivid fancy, entirely free from that "morbid mysticism" which is so prominent a characteristic of the poetry of the last thirty years—whose narrative compositions, such as "The Story of Rimini," are among the very best of the kind in the language, characterised by simple beauty, and a sparkling grace and movement quite peculiar to himself—an excellent translator from the Italian and Greek poets,—a dramatist who has enriched this department of literature with his beautiful "Legend of Florence,"—and one

of the best theatrical critics we ever had—but he also occupied, in his earlier years, a distinguished position as an editor and journalist.

In 1803 he and his brother John started the "Examiner," which was for more than twelve years conducted by the former. Great were the services rendered by them, in those years, to the cause of free speech. No journal in the kingdom advocated liberal principles with more invincible courage than the "Examiner." Every liberal measure, without a single exception, which has since become the law of the land, did it plead for and support; and that, too, at a time when to be a reformer was almost certain to subject a political writer to the greatest risks and sufferings both in purse and person. The "Examiner" was one of the very boldest and most courageous of that small band which maintained through disastrous times its allegiance to the cause of liberty and reform. Hunt and his brother threw themselves, heart and soul, into the thick of the struggle, and fought for years in the foremost rank with true self-devotion—suffering a two years' imprisonment, and a pecuniary loss by fine, &c., of nearly £2,000. Well has it been said that those who carry on the journalism of the present day with the same views, should never forget that they are the more free to do so from the self-sacrificing spirit which animated those two

brothers. The failure of the attempt to crush the "Examiner" was a triumph, and an encouragement to the whole English press. As a journalist, no man did more than Leigh Hunt, in his time, to raise the tone of newspaper writing, to introduce into it the amenities of literature and art, and to infuse into its keenest controversies the utmost fairness and tolerance. In all he wrote in connection with politics, he invariably exhibited a true gentlemanliness, united to a spirit of the greatest candour, which gave the "Examiner" a very high character in intellectual circles.

---

A long list might be given of critics of high authority who have borne testimony to Hunt's genius and literary accomplishments. Among them may be named Shelley, Keats, Byron, Lamb, Hazlitt, Lord Lytton (Bulwer), Dickens, Thackeray, R. H. Horne, W. Howitt, W. J. Fox, Mary Russell Mitford, Mary and Charles Cowden Clarke, Gerald Massey, Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes), Nathaniel Hawthorne, and a host of others. Some of these testimonies are so admirably expressed that it is only just to the memory of Hunt to record a few sentences culled from the choicest of them.

Thomas Carlyle, during the earlier years of his residence in London, was on very

intimate terms of friendship with Hunt. On one occasion he thus spoke of him :—

“Well seen into, he has done much for the world, as every man possessed of such qualities, and freely speaking them forth in the abundance of his heart, for thirty years long, must needs do; how much, they that could judge best would perhaps estimate highest.”

When Hunt's “Autobiography” appeared in 1850, Carlyle read it with the deepest interest, and wrote to the author expressing his admiration of the work. A letter more over-flowing with loving-kindness, and hearty recognition and sympathy, is not to be found in the whole range of literary correspondence. A *verbatim* reprint of this letter has never before appeared. The following is a faithful reproduction of the original, of which the compiler of “The Book-Lover's Enchiridion” is the fortunate possessor :—

“Dear Hunt,

“I have just finished your ‘Autobiography,’ which has been most pleasantly occupying all my leisure these three days; and you must permit me to write you a word upon it, out of the fulness of the heart, while the impulse is still fresh, to thank you. This good Book, in every sense one of the best I have read this long while, has awakened many old thoughts, which never were extinct, or even properly *asleep*, but

which (like so much else) have had to fall silent amid the tempests of an evil time,—Heaven mend it! A word from me, once more, I know, will not be unwelcome, while the world is talking of you.

“Well, I call this an excellently good Book; by far the best of the autobiographic kind I remember to have read in the English language; and indeed, except it be Boswell’s of Johnson, I do not know where we have such a Picture drawn of a human Life, as in these three volumes. A pious, ingenious, altogether *human* and worthy Book; imaging with graceful honesty and free felicity, many interesting objects and persons on your life-path,—and imaging throughout, what is best of all, a gifted, gentle, patient and valiant human soul, as it buffets its way thro’ the billows of the time, and will not drown, tho’ often in danger; *cannot* be drowned, but conquers, and leaves a track of radiance behind it: that, I think, comes out more clearly to me than in any other of your Books; and that I can venture to assure you is the best of all results to realise in a Book or written record. In fact this Book has been like an exercise of *devotion* to me: I have not assisted at any sermon, liturgy or litany, this long while, that has had so religious an effect on me. Thanks in the name of all men! And believe along with me that this Book will be welcome to other generations as well as to ours—and long may you live to write more Books for us; and may the

evening sun be softer on you (and on me) than the noon sometimes was !

"Adieu, dear Hunt, (you must let me use this familiarity, for I am an old fellow too now as well as you). I have often thought of coming up to see you once more; and perhaps I shall one of these days (tho' horribly sick and lonely, and beset with spectral lions, go whitherward I may); but whether I do or not, believe for ever in my regard. And so God bless you.

"Yours heartily,

"T. CARLYLE."

Lord Lytton (Bulwer), in an article in the "Quarterly Review" on "Charles Lamb and some of his Companions," pays a graceful and tender tribute to Hunt :—

"In one of his most delightful essays, entitled 'My Books,' Hunt, speaking of the great writers who were book-lovers like himself, exclaims, 'How pleasant it is to reflect that all these lovers of books have themselves become books.' And after pursuing that thought through 'links of sweetness long drawn out,' concludes with a modest pathos, 'May I hope to become the meanest of these existences? . . . I should like to remain visible in this shape. The little of myself that pleases myself I could wish to be accounted worth pleasing others. I should like to survive so, were it only for the sake of those who love me in private, knowing, as I do, what a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind when he is no more.'

"We think few can read this very lovely passage and not sympathise cordially in the wish so nobly conceived and so tenderly expressed. Something not to be replaced would be struck out of the gentler literature of our century, could the mind of Leigh Hunt cease to speak to us in a book."

In a criticism on Hunt, written more than thirty years before the date of the above extract, the same writer thus speaks of him as a critic, and of his freedom from all rancour or literary jealousy:—

"His kindly and cheerful sympathy with nature—his perception of the minuter and more latent sources of the beautiful—spread an irresistible charm over his compositions. . . . In criticism, indeed, few living writers have equalled those subtle and delicate compositions which have appeared in the 'Indicator,' the 'Tatler,' and the earlier pages of the 'Examiner'—and above all, none have excelled the poet now before our own critical bar in the kindly sympathies with which, in judging of others, he has softened down the asperities, and resisted the caprices, common to the exercise of power. In him the young poet has ever found a generous encourager no less than a faithful guide. None of the jealousy or the rancour ascribed to literary men, and almost natural to such literary men as the world has wronged, have gained access to his true heart, or embittered his generous sympathies. Struggling against no light misfortunes, and no common foes, he has not helped to

retaliate upon rising authors the difficulty and the depreciation which have burdened his own career; he has kept, undiminished and unbroken, through all reverses, that first requisite of a good critic—a good heart.”

William Hazlitt concludes a paper on Hunt with this high estimate of him:—

“His critical and miscellaneous papers have all the ease, grace, and power of the best style of essay writing. Many of his effusions in the ‘Indicator’ show that, if he had devoted himself exclusively to that mode of writing, he inherits more of the spirit of Steele than any man since his time.”

His friend, John Keats, the Poet, has these lines:—

“And I shall ever bless my destiny,  
That in a time, when under pleasant trees  
Pain is no longer sought, I feel a free,  
A leafy luxury, seeing I could please,  
With these poor offerings, a man like thee.”

Shelley dedicated his great tragedy, “The Cenci,” to Hunt, using these words:—

“Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent, and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do or think evil, and yet himself



more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler and (in the highest sense of the word) of purer life and manners, I never knew; and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list. . . . All happiness attend you."

Charles Lamb, in his celebrated Letter to Southey, says:—

"He is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew—a matchless friend and companion."

Many years after the unscrupulous and malicious attacks on Hunt in "Blackwood's Magazine," John Wilson (Christopher North), the Editor, made the following hearty *amende honorable* :—

"And Shelley truly loved Leigh Hunt. Their friendship was favourable to both, for it was as disinterested as serene. . . . The animosities are mortal, but the humanities live for ever. . . . Leigh Hunt has more talent in his little finger than the •puling prig who has taken upon himself to lecture Christopher North in a scrawl crawling with forgotten falsehoods. Mr. Hunt's 'London Journal,' my dear James, is not only beyond all comparison, but out of all sight, the most entertaining and instructive of all the cheap periodicals; and when laid, as it duly is once a week, on my breakfast-

table, it lies there—but it is not permitted to lie long—like a spot of sunshine dazzling the snow.” — “Noctes Ambrosianæ,” in “Blackwood's Magazine,” August, 1834.

It is also known that Wilson, long after the brutal attacks above alluded to, wrote to Hunt, expressing his regret for the injustice he had done to him, solely from the political antagonism and fierce party feeling of the time—inviting him at the same time to write in the Magazine. This Hunt declined; but Wilson's apology gave him great satisfaction.

Those who are acquainted with his papers in the “Indicator,” and “Companion,” and “Tatler,” and “London Journal,” are familiar with the characteristics of his pen. There were few better critics of English style than Lockhart, and although he was a virulent political enemy of Hunt, he is reported to have spoken most highly of his prose and of the Essays in the “Indicator.” Surely never did a brace of folio volumes hold within them more varied and pleasant reading than the “London Journal,” with its felicitous motto:—“To assist the enquiring, animate the struggling, and sympathise with all.” But it was too refined, too literary, too *récherché*, for the mass of ordinary readers. It aimed too high above their heads. It was calculated for a better class—for readers of culture, and imagination, and

taste. The reader will find further on some very pertinent remarks on this *unique* periodical, from the pen of one intimately acquainted with its contents.

Lord Macaulay, in an article in the "Edinburgh Review," says of Hunt:—

"We really think that there is hardly a man whose merits have been so grudgingly allowed, and whose faults have been so cruelly expiated. . . . We do not always agree with his literary judgments; but we find in him, what is very rare in our time, the power of justly appreciating and heartily enjoying good things of very different kinds."

Edmund Ollier, the accomplished son of Charles Ollier, the friend of Hunt and the publisher of Keats's and Shelley's earliest works, in a striking essay on Hunt's genius thus speaks of his judgment and fine balance of mind:—

"Leigh Hunt's criticism may never have reached the majestic and sonorous heights of Hazlitt's masterpieces; it had less of eloquence and force; but it was more reliable and more even. Its quality was exquisitely refined and delicate—the result of a natural sensibility, educated and trained by long and careful study; but it is a mistake to suppose that its only characteristic was sympathy. No doubt, sympathy was a chief element; but not more so than judgment. Leigh Hunt has never had justice

done him for the excellent sense and sanity of his mind. . . . Hunt seems always to preserve the balance of his faculties. With great powers of admiration, a strong sense of enjoyment, and an ardent disposition, he nevertheless appeared to know the exact line beyond which literary worship passes into superstition."

Hunt's intimate and dear friend, John Forster, author of "The Statesmen of the Commonwealth," "Life of Goldsmith," "Life of Dickens," &c., said of him:—

"There was surely never a man of so sunny a nature who could draw so much pleasure from common things, or to whom books were a world so real, so exhaustless, so delightful. I was only seventeen when I derived from him the tasks which have been the solace of all subsequent years, and I well remember the last time I saw him at Hammersmith, not long before his death in 1859, when, with his delicate, worn, but keenly intellectual face, his large luminous eyes, his thick grey hair, and a little cape of black silk over his shoulders, he looked like an old French abbé. He was buoyant and pleasant as ever, and was busy upon a vindication of Chaucer and Spenser from Cardinal Wiseman, who had attacked them."

The same writer, in an article in the "Athenæum," has these concluding words:—

"No one draws out the exquisite passages

of a favourite author with such conscious relish—no one is happier or finer in the distinction of beauties—no one more engaging in taking the reader's sympathy for granted. . . . He is the prince of parlour-window writers; whether it be of the winter parlour with its 'sea-coal fire' and its warmly-cushioned seat in the oriel, to hear the wind pining outside which is so luxurious an enhancement of comfort—or the summer parlour, with its open window, curtained by woodbine draperies or veiled with jessamine flowers."

Talfourd and Jerrold were both warm admirers of Hunt's writings. The former said of him:—

"His beauty and pathos will live when all topics of temporary irritation have expired; one who has been 'true as steel' to the best hopes of human nature; a poet, a wit, and an honest man."

Jerrold said of him:—

"If Goldsmith could touch nothing but what he adorned, it may be said of Leigh Hunt that he touches nothing without extracting beauty from it, and without imparting a sense of it to his readers."

Thackeray and Dickens have both left tributes to Hunt's genius and character. Thackeray's words are:—

"Few essayists have equalled, or approached, Leigh Hunt in the combined

versatility, invention, and finish of his miscellaneous prose writings; and few, indeed, have brought such varied sympathies to call forth the sympathies of the reader—and always to good purpose,—in favour of kindness, of reflection, of natural pleasures, of culture, and of using the available resources of life."

From Dickens's touching tribute a few sentences only can be given:—

"His was an essentially human nature, rich and inclusive. . . . sometimes overclouded with the shadow of affliction, but more often bright and hopeful, and at all times sympathetic; taking a keen delight in all beautiful things—in the exhaustless world of books and art, in the rising genius of young authors, in the immortal language of music, in trees and flowers, . . . in the sunlight which came, as he used to say, like a visitor out of heaven, glorifying humble places; in the genial intercourse of mind with mind; in the most trifling incidents of daily life that spoke of truth and nature, . . . in the domesticities of family life, and in the general progress of the world, . . . who, in the midst of the sorest temptations, maintained his honesty unblemished by a single stain—who, in all public and private transactions, was the very soul of truth and honour."

From the article "Leigh Hunt" in the new Edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica,"

by Mr. Richard Garnett, the deservedly popular administrator of the Reading Room of the British Museum Library—an accomplished scholar, whose opinion of Hazlitt has been recorded at page 265—the following sentences are taken :—

“In his ‘Imagination and Fancy’ and ‘Wit and Humour’ he shows himself as within a certain range, the most refined, appreciative and felicitous of critics. With Chaucer, Spenser, and the old English dramatists he is perfectly at home, and his subtle and discriminating criticism upon them, as well as upon his own great contemporaries, is continually bringing to light beauties unsuspected by the reader, as they were probably undesigned by the writer. . . . He possessed every qualification for a translator. . . . As an appreciative critic, whether literary or dramatic, he is hardly equalled; his guidance is as safe as it is genial. . . . He was, in fact, as thorough a man of letters as ever existed, and most of his failings were more or less incidental to that character. But it is not every consummate man of letters of whom it can be unhesitatingly affirmed that he was brave, just and pious.”

Lord Houghton (Monckton Mills), speaking of Hunt's characteristics as a poetical critic, says :—

“There is one sphere of literature in which I think I may say that he was absolutely

eminent. I mean that of poetical criticism. In that field I place him before any other man of letters in this country. What made him so earnest in this was no less the acuteness of his penetration, and the tenderness of his taste, than the generosity and nobility of his disposition. With him criticism, which is too often an enemy and a detective, was a gracious patron and a faithful friend. He criticised because he admired and loved, and would have passed over error and fault which he could not conceal from himself, and rested upon everything that was gracious and beautiful. So in his contemplation of the past he has brought forward and presented the beauties of our poetic literature in a manner so vivid, in a style so graceful, that it is impossible to overrate the value of that contribution to the intellectual education of our country."

Mary Cowden Clarke—whose admirable "Concordance to Shakespeare" will ever hold an honourable and conspicuous place in English literature, as a monument of unexampled industry and faithful accuracy—and her genial and gifted husband, were among Hunt's most cherished friends. In their charming volume, "Recollections of Writers," seventy-two pages are devoted to Leigh Hunt and his letters. Mrs. Clarke, in the following sonnet, selected from several on the same subject, thus records her opinion of him:—



“A power instinctive hadst thou to perceive  
The brightest points in all created things:  
The music in the brooklet's murmurings,  
The ripple on the sand the sea doth leave,  
The silver on the thread the spiders weave,  
The nested happiness of bird that sings,  
The God-sent comfort that full often  
springs  
From sorrow bravely borne by hearts that  
grieve.  
Ay, Sage wert thou in thy poetic gift,  
That taught thee how from commonest of  
earth  
The golden grains of beauty's self to sift,  
Discov'ring plenty where there seem'd but  
dearth.  
Thy thoughts, thy words, thy mien, with  
grace replete,  
Proclaim'd thee Poet 'every inch' com-  
plete.”

An ardent admirer of Hunt—Mr. Frank Carr, of Newcastle, who chooses to write under the *nom de plume* of Lancelot Cross—has devoted a dainty little volume to the “London Journal” and the varied treasures it contains. He says of it:—

“The charm of his articles does not lie alone in their ever sparkling freshness, in the morning sweetness that pervades them, but in the largeness of their scope—in their consideration, according to the call of the moment, of all human needs. Hunt's was of the inquisitive and exploring order of minds; industry and method he shared with

hundreds of other literary workers—but he superadded (and therein lay his power) a genial humanity which looked on all things with an equal eye, moved towards all with a warm sympathising heart, and sought good in all things with a clear, trustful mind. His style was conversational picturesqueness, richness of ready learning, *plus* unfailing cordiality and communicativeness. If we had to state his power in a brief sentence it would be—the alchemy of intelligent loving-kindness."

"There is to be found in those two volumes," he says, "matter that will stir every pure power of the soul—smiles, tears, deep thought, and devotion. It is a book that can be laid before the child, the lady, the poet, and the philosopher. It is a noble boast when an author can declare that he leaves not 'one line which, dying, he could wish to blot;' but it is tenfold higher praise when it may be said of him that he has not only left his multifarious writings pure,—all misconceptions atoned for, all rash judgments corrected—(as when he says 'How pleasant it is thus to find oneself reconciled to men whom we have ignorantly under-valued, and how fortunate to have lived long enough to say so')—but that in the immense mass of charming selections that he has made and commented upon over a long period of time, there is not one sullied by temper, pruriency, or factiousness. Their range includes the fruits of all intellects, of all forms of human endeavour, from the sayings of childhood to

those of the wisest of the sons of man; from instances of domestic magnanimity to the heroic achievements in art, science, and public strife, and each and all convey the most ennobling lessons. We love the glorious two folios for their own sake, and because, in addition to other great merits, they are a Prime Exemplar of Periodical Literature for fulness, variety, ease, elegance, enthusiasm, and urbanity."

---

Many more opinions could be given regarding Leigh Hunt's genius and writings; but a limit must be placed to these delightful quotations, which cannot be more appropriately concluded than with the two following passages—one of them the concluding words of his eldest son's introduction to his father's "Autobiography"—the other what he himself said near the close of his life. His son's words are:—

"To promote the happiness of his kind, to minister to the more educated appreciation of order and beauty, to open more widely the door of the library, and more widely the window of the library looking out upon nature—these were the purposes that guided his studies and animated his labour to the very last."

His own life Leigh Hunt pronounced to have been, upon the whole, not unhappy, notwithstanding his ill-health, his struggles

and his difficulties. There was more of real pleasure crowded into it than many of the more favoured children of fortune have experienced in their whole career. His genial nature, his sympathies and kind heart, his well-stored mind, and pure, refined tastes made his existence, with all its trials and sorrows, a full and happy one. Few men could say, like him, in his closing years:—

“I am not aware that I have a single enemy, and I accept the fortunes, good and bad, which have occurred to me, with the same disposition to believe them the best that could have happened, whether for the correction of what was wrong in me, or for the improvement of what was right. I have never lost cheerfulness of mind or opinion. What evils there are, I find to be, for the most part, relieved with many consolations; some I find to be necessary to the requisite amount of good; and every one of them I find come to a termination, for either they are cured and live, or are killed and die; and in the latter case I see no evidence to prove that a little finger of them aches any more.”

---

Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. have published in a cheap and neat form seven volumes of Hunt's works, viz., “Imagination and Fancy,” “Wit and Humour,” “Men, Women, and Books,” “A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla,” “Table Talk,” “The Town,” and his “Autobiography, with Reminiscences of

Friends and Contemporaries." But this series contains none of his papers and essays in "The Reflector," "The Round Table," "The Indicator," "The Companion," "The Literary Examiner," "The Tatler," and "London Journal," in which will be found some of the best things he has written. The last-named periodical (1834-5) is often to be met with in second-hand catalogues for a few shillings. When a copy occurs it should always be purchased, even by those who already possess one—to be given away to some friend who will appreciate its contents, and thank the donor for so delightful a gift. A volume or two of well-selected passages from Hunt's best writings would be a fitting tribute to his genius, and a boon to thoughtful readers. In the United States several volumes of reprints of essays selected from the periodicals we have named attest the sagacity of American publishers, as well as the taste of the readers who purchase them.

A. I.





# INDEX.

---

	PAGE
Addison, Joseph .. .. .	49
Aikin, Dr. John .. .. .	60
Alcott, A. Bronson .. .. .	139
Alexandria, Inscription on Library at	2
Alonzo of Arragon .. .. .	19
Arnold, Dr. T. .. .. .	146
Arnott, Dr. .. .. .	114
Atkinson, W. P. .. .. .	288
Axon, W. E. A. .. .. .	242
Bacon, Francis .. .. .	14
Bailey, Philip James .. .. .	192
Baxter, Richard .. .. .	33
Beecher, Henry Ward .. .. .	184
Bennoch, Francis .. .. .	184
Blades, William .. .. .	240
Boston Literary World .. .. .	237
Bright, John.. .. .	178
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett .. .. .	176
Bruyère, La .. .. .	44
Brydges, Sir S. Egerton .. .. .	64
Burton, Robert .. .. .	21
Bury, Richard de .. .. .	4
Buxton, Charles .. .. .	212
Carlyle, Thomas .. .. .	127
Channing, Dr. W. Ellery.. .. .	89
Chapin, Dr. .. .. .	250

	PAGE
Chaucer, Geoffrey .. .. .	7
Cicero .. .. .	2
Clarke, Rev. J. Freeman .. .. .	244
Collier, Jeremy .. .. .	44
Collyer, Robert .. .. .	216
Congreve, William .. .. .	48
Cotton, Charles .. .. .	43
Cowley, Abraham .. .. .	37
Cowper, William.. .. .	57
Daniel, Samuel .. .. .	15
Davenant, Sir William .. .. .	29
Dawson, George .. .. .	204
Denham, Sir John .. .. .	36
De Quincey, Thomas.. .. .	109
Diderot, Denis .. .. .	55
Divine, A Seventeenth Century .. .. .	26
Dodd, Dr. William .. .. .	56
Earle, Bishop .. .. .	29
Emerson, Ralph Waldo .. .. .	157
Evans, Marian (George Eliot) .. .. .	201
Feltham, Owen .. .. .	31
Fenelon, Archbishop .. .. .	48
Ferriar, Dr. John .. .. .	68
Fletcher, John .. .. .	20
Florio, John .. .. .	13
Freeland, William .. .. .	241
Friswell, James Hain .. .. .	220
Fuller, Dr. Thomas .. .. .	30
Gibbon, Edward .. .. .	59
Godwin, William .. .. .	63
Goldsmith, Oliver .. .. .	56



	PAGE
Green, Matthew .. .. .	53
Hall, Bishop Joseph .. .. .	17
Hamerton, Philip Gilbert .. .. .	225
Hare, Archdeacon Julius C. .. .. .	126
Harrison, Frederick .. .. .	222
Havergal, Frances R. .. .. .	236
Hazlitt, William.. .. .	80
Helps, Sir Arthur .. .. .	192
Herschel, Sir John .. .. .	116
Hillard, George S. .. .. .	171
Hindu Saying .. .. .	4
Holmes, Dr. Oliver Wendell .. .. .	175
Horace .. .. .	2
Hunt, Leigh .. .. .	93
Inchbald, Mrs. .. .. .	63
Irving, Washington .. .. .	93
Johnson, Dr. Samuel .. .. .	58
Kempis, Thomas à .. .. .	8
Kingsley, Charles .. .. .	193
Lamb, Charles .. .. .	69
Landor, Walter Savage .. .. .	79
Langford, Dr. J. A. .. .. .	213
Locke, John .. .. .	44
Longfellow, H. W. .. .. .	251
Luther, Martin .. .. .	9
Lylie, John .. .. .	14
Lytton (Bulwer), Lord .. .. .	150
Macaulay, T. B. .. .. .	147
Maurice, Rev. F. D. .. .. .	169
Ménage, Giles .. .. .	32
Middleton, Dr. Conyers .. .. .	50

	PAGE
Milton, John.. .. .	30
Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley .. ..	51
Montaigne, Michael de .. ..	9
Montesquieu, Baron .. ..	51
Moore, Dr. John .. ..	57
Overbury, Sir Thomas .. ..	25
Palmer, Samuel .. ..	170
Parker, Theodore .. ..	177
Peacock, Love .. ..	113
Persian, From the .. ..	4
Phillips, G. S. (January Searle) .. ..	187
Phillips, Wendell .. ..	183
Plato.. ..	1
Plutarch .. ..	3
Pope, Alexander .. ..	51
Prayer, Book of Common .. ..	14
Procter, Bryan Waller (Barry Corn- wall) .. ..	110
Quick, Rev. R. H. .. ..	239
Richardson, Charles F. .. ..	244
Richter, Jean Paul F. .. ..	67
Rioja, Francesco di .. ..	29
Roscoe, William .. ..	62
Ruskin, John .. ..	194
Schopenhauer, Arthur .. ..	111
Seneca .. ..	3
Shakespeare, William .. ..	16
Shenstone, William .. ..	55
Shirley, James .. ..	27
Sidney, Sir Philip .. ..	14

	PAGE
Socrates .. .. .	1
Solomon .. .. .	1
Southey, Robert .. .. .	68
Steele, Sir Richard .. .. .	48
Sterne, Laurence .. .. .	55
Stevenson, Robert Louis .. .. .	244
Stirling-Maxwell, Lady .. .. .	173
St. Paul .. .. .	4
Temple, Sir William .. .. .	43
Thackeray, W. M. .. .. .	193
Thirlwall, Bishop .. .. .	139
Trollope, Anthony .. .. .	220
Waller, Sir William .. .. .	27
Walpole, Horace .. .. .	55
Ware, Mary C. .. .. .	237
Watts, Dr. Isaac .. .. .	50
Whipple, E. .. .. .	241
Willmott, Rev. R. Aris .. .. .	174
Wither, George .. .. .	26
Wytttenbach, Daniel .. .. .	60

## APPENDIX :

William Hazlitt, as Essayist and Critic .. .. .	255
Leigh Hunt, his Genius and Characteristics .. .. .	273

MANCHESTER:  
PRINTED BY A. IRELAND AND CO.,  
PALM MALL.

## Opinions of the Press.

---

### *The Times.*

A choice little volume, the compilation of which has evidently been a labour of love, and the result is a store-house of admirable quotations, which readers should make much of.

### *Daily News.*

A beautifully-printed little volume, after the pattern of the famous "Elzevir" classics. The extracts seem to be the fruit of extensive original reading of dead and living authors.

### *Pall Mall Gazette.*

A pretty little gift-book, containing the thoughts on books and the love of reading of many writers from Solomon to Carlyle. Printed on thick paper, in small but admirably clear type, it is small enough to be carried in the pocket of a coat without any inconvenience.

### *Athenæum.*

A very charming little volume, arranged in a way that shows a true love of literature. The extracts supply some delightful reading.

### *Academy.*

This little book deserves the name of "Enchiridion" better than many others so entitled. It will serve to confirm in his creed the devout lover of books, by reminding him of what many of the literary hierarchy of various lands and ages have written concerning them. The selection is very catholic.

### *Literary World.*

A very dainty little tome. The binding, in enamelled white cloth, with black lettering and red edges, or in white and gold with gilt edges, is exquisite. It consists of selections from one hundred and twenty authors, both ancient and modern, in praise of the solace and companionship of books.

### *Manchester Guardian.*

A dainty gift-book which will give great pleasure to every lover of literature. Its appearance is of the most attractive character. No better gift could be devised for a studious youth or girl, for it should certainly foster a taste for literature that in after years will be at once a strength and a solace.

### *Bradford Observer.*

The motto chosen for this exquisite marvel of typography, "Infinite riches in a little room," fitly describes both its matter and its manner. The grace and aptness of the quotations on "the solace and companionship of books" and the wise selection of authors are alike striking. The opening sentences are from Solomon, and then the

reader finds himself in company with a long succession of the wisest and the most distinguished men of letters, who tell him what books have been to them, and should be to all open minds. These present a brilliant company which could only have been summoned by one closely familiar with men of letters of all times.

### *Scotsman.*

It is beautifully got up, and printed with great clearness and beauty. It contains a selection from many writers, of wise sayings on the solace and companionship of books, the like of which we do not remember to have met with before. There is no book more intrinsically suited for a wise present than this.

### *Chambers's Journal.*

A beautiful little book. In it you have, as its motto indicates, "Infinite riches in a little room"—the selected writers ranging from Solomon and Cicero down to Carlyle and Ruskin and Emerson. All the extracts are good—every tit-bit is sweet and toothsome. All will thank the compiler heartily and gratefully for this delightful supply of "medicine for the mind."

### *The Christian Leader.*


This is the daintiest book of a season unusually fruitful in typographical gems. It contains the distilled essence of a reader of fifty years' acquaintance with the best authors of past and present times.

Everything that printer and binder could possibly do to make the volume "a thing of beauty" has been done, so that externally it is a perfect work of art; and the selections, worthy of such a setting, will indeed be "a joy for ever" to all who become possessors of the book. No section of the vast field of the world's literature has been overlooked; apostles and philosophers, evangelists and novelists, the leaders of science and the sons of song, are laid under tribute; we have them all, from St. Paul and Plato, Horace and Cicero, to Carlyle, Emerson, and Ruskin. The collection deserves praise not only for its sound judgment and exquisite taste, but also for its catholicity. The maker of this little book does not bow down to mere names. He takes the really good thing, no matter where he finds it.





**This book is DUE on the last  
date stamped below**



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**B** 000 001 311 0

